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TOP TIPS
GRIM FANDANGO
CARMAGEDDON II
SETTLERS III

WHAT'S ON THE COVER DISC?
FULL DETAILS PAGE 142

O TINY COMPO: What was the subtitle to the first Lands Of Lore Game? First out of the hat wins a mystery prize – full details on page 6

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REVIEWS

The most definitive reviews section around. All the latest and greatest PC games (and, of course, some of the worst) come under the cynical *PC ZONE* microscope. This is the place to come before shelling out on that new game you've got your eye on

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ON THE CD

FULL DETAILS PAGE 142

That silvery thing on the cover is loaded with great demos, patches and helpful files guaranteed to ensure you get more out of your PC

DON'T MISS DEMOS OF...
SID MEIER'S ALPHA CENTAURI
KING'S QUEST VIII: MASK OF ETERNITY
MYTH II: SOULBLIGHTER
RESIDENT EVIL 2
STAR WARS: ROGUE SQUADRON 3D
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PLUS
Patches for Half-Life, Dune 2000, Wargasm and StarCraft
Lots of useful games utilities and...
oh, just go to page 142 and see

"Lands Of Lore III is a combination of adventure, RPG and action game, held together with a strong narrative"

COVER STORY 68-71 LANDS OF LORE III An epic role-playing adventure from the team that brought us *Command & Conquer* and *Red Alert*.

➲ What the fu...? Find out on page 22.

THE COMPO NO ONE FINDS Correctly answer this month's cover question and you could win some PC goodies. Send your entry on a postcard addressed to: **The Compo No One Finds (74), PC ZONE, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ.** The first entry with the correct answer plucked out of the hat wins a mystery prize. The Ed's decision is final. Closing date: Wednesday 10 March. The winner of our February cover compo was Steven Moore from Sheffield, who correctly stated that *Championship Manager* first took to the field in 1991. Well done, Steven. You'll be receiving your prize shortly.

WIN!

GAMES VERSUS REAL LIFE

Occasionally – *very* occasionally, in fact – a game comes along that grabs you by the throat and won't let you go. It's the kind of game that annoys you all the time you're not playing it (you're on the tube, and you're already planning what you're going to do in the game when you get home). You lie awake at night thinking up new strategies, despite the fact that it's three in the morning and you've got work next day. Your weekends disappear and you find yourself playing until 5am, sleeping for a few hours and then going straight back into it again. In short, it takes over your life.

"Half-Life" is no doubt the resounding chorus booming from *PC ZONE* readers all over the country as they read these words. Wrong. *Half-Life* doesn't even come close to this baby. I'm talking about *Ultima Online*, a game so rich and varied,

so intricately detailed and splendidly realised, that it would be almost impossible for me to describe to you the beauty of its many pleasures. But I'm going to try anyway.

You see, despite the fact that it's an incredible game in its own right, and the best example of the acclaimed *Ultima* series to date, it's not actually the game itself that's taken such a grip on me. It's the people who play it. *Ultima Online* is a living, breathing world with 'real' people going about their daily business, forming guilds, fighting together, fighting each other, and desperately trying to find their 'place' in the great scheme of things. I'm not going to go into too much detail on the intricacies of *UO* here (look out for a regular column on *UO* in *ZONE* soon), but suffice to say never in my life have I played a game with so many unique features and such an infinite scope for

varied approach to gameplay. How bad has it got for me? Well, I actually amazed myself when I realised I was having an inner debate as to whether I would spend the night engrossed in a lengthy *UO* session or watching Chelsea in the FA Cup! (Chelsea won out in the end, by the way.) Bad news.

Such is my enthusiasm for this game that everyone on the *PC ZONE* team is sufficiently intrigued to want to find out for themselves what all the fuss is about. I advise you to do the same. And then write in and tell me about it. Incidentally, there is an Obsessed feature this month on *Ultima Online* (see page 58) in which Adrian Selby claims to be *Ultima Online*'s number one fan. Want to argue about it, Adrian? You know where to find me. The rest of you, enjoy the issue. See you again next month.

Chris Anderson, Editor

MEET THE ZONE TEAM

All *PC ZONE*'s reviewers are experts in their field. We like to give every game that comes in for review the best chance, which is why we give it to a reviewer who's a fan of the genre

Chris Anderson
Tiberian Sun – will it live up to the hype? I'm not convinced by Westwood's decision to use voxels over polygons. They're obviously hoping the level design will make it shine. They'd better get it right, that's my point. *Daikatana* – will it live up to the hype? It depends how much longer the hype lasts. But yes, I think they can pull it off.

Paul Mallinson
Tiberian Sun – will it live up to the hype? Having played it, I can't wait to get the finished game. Graphically it's nothing special, but it's got gameplay by the bucketload. *Daikatana* – will it live up to the hype? It's going to have its work cut out after *Half-Life*, but then so is every 3D shooter that comes along now.

Richie Shoemaker
Tiberian Sun – will it live up to the hype? Possibly. Just. Technology-wise it won't be much to write home about, but Westwood have never failed when it comes to mission design. *Daikatana* – will it live up to the hype? John Romero = gaming pedigree and clever level design. Enough said.

Jeremy Wells
Tiberian Sun – will it live up to the hype? I think so. Many people wrote it off because it's sprite-based and doesn't use a 3D engine. That said, I'm yet to play a 3D-powered RTS that I've liked more than *C&C*. *Daikatana* – will it live up to the hype? Let's hope so. It'll have to be something special to be better than *Half-Life*.

Steve Hill
Tiberian Sun – will it live up to the hype? It's taken a long time, but I assume Westwood know what they're doing. *Daikatana* – will it live up to the hype? I'm interviewing John Romero for *PC ZONE* next week, so I'll ask him.

Charlie Brooker
Tiberian Sun – will it live up to the hype? No. *Daikatana* – will it live up to the hype? No.

Paul Presley
Tiberian Sun – will it live up to the hype? No. It will be plain and ordinary. Like Zoe Ball. *Daikatana* – will it live up to the hype? No. It will be a mixture of broken promises and half-arsed ideas. Like Zoe Ball.

Keith Pullin
Tiberian Sun – will it live up to the hype? I don't think so. It'll be a good game, but when does anything truly live up to the hype? *Daikatana* – will it live up to the hype? Once again, doubtful. Boardroom scuffles must surely have affected the team's performance.

Adam Phillips
Tiberian Sun – will it live up to the hype? While it may not boast the real-time 3D glories that everyone wished for, if Westwood's knack for developing great gameplay is present, who gives a toss about polygons? *Daikatana* – will it live up to the hype? To be frank, I'm more interested in what's going on behind the scenes at Ion Storm.

David McCandless
Tiberian Sun – will it live up to the hype? The goalposts have moved. Our survey says (*Family Fortunes* electronic fart noise)... *Daikatana* – will it live up to the hype? It's a damn shame, but probably not.

Warren Chrismas
Tiberian Sun – will it live up to the hype? I hope so. But it needs to be a lot better than and different to *C&C*. *Daikatana* – will it live up to the hype? It'll probably meet *my* expectations, but only because after all the delays and problems at Ion Storm my expectations aren't that high. I'm certainly not expecting it to be better than *Half-Life*.

Phil Wand
Tiberian Sun – will it live up to the hype? Westwood wrote the real-time strategy cookbook, and they're all too aware that everyone's watching them. They can't afford to get it wrong, and so they won't. *Daikatana* – will it live up to the hype? I doubt if it will be anywhere near as accessible as *Half-Life*.

MAILBOX

The great patch debate continues to rage unabated; one man's crusade against online gaming cheats; and *Charlie Brooker* is forced to eat his own arse. No, really

⭐ **ANSWERED BY** Chris Anderson

LETTER OF THE MONTH

DID I SAY THAT?

Hello. I remember Charlie Brooker saying that if *Carmageddon II* didn't win Game of the Year he would eat his arse! Oh dear, look at what *did* win! I could supply the 'brown sauce'. I WANT PICTURES!

David Gower (No, please don't!)

✪ Charlie responds: Damn. Thanks for pointing that out, David. As a man of my word, I'll make sure I eat it at the earliest opportunity. By the way, thanks, but I don't need the brown sauce – my arse can generate that by itself. Next time I'll vow to eat someone *else's* arse. Any suggestions?

GOODIES WINNER!

Charlie goes for his arse with discomforting enthusiasm. Actual act not shown for obvious reasons.

THE NON-INTERACTIVE INTERNET

I was very interested and deeply concerned by the letter from Daniel Woolstencroft published in the February (#73) issue of your magazine.

I appear to be reading more and more about games being released without being fully tested, and although it may be acceptable to some people to download patches from the Internet, for gamers like myself it is a nightmare, as I do not own – or wish to own – a modem.

I recently had a problem with *Sensible Soccer (World Cup Edition)* not being compatible with Windows 98. I was informed by the publishers that I could download a patch, but I explained I had no access to the Internet. They were unable to send the patch on a disk, explaining that my choices were: 1) return the game to the shop; 2) buy a modem; 3) buy every computer magazine every month until I find a patch on one of their cover discs, which, basically translated, is 'tough shit'. With some difficulty I managed to obtain a refund for the game. I tried again recently with the *European Edition*, which I am pleased to say works fine.

However, I recently read a review of *The Operational Art Of War* that made my mouth water (yes, I know I'm sad), which finished by saying that

> **❝The game looks like it's going to be better than Nell McAndrew [aka Lara Croft] smothered in chocolate, with no spoon around❞**
> **NEIL BARRINGTON ON *HALF-LIFE***

there was a serious bug relating to the 'supply lines' which crippled the game. It went on to say that Talonsoft had a fantastic reputation for supporting and patching their games, and that a patch was already available on the Internet. This was small comfort to me, and needless to say I did not buy a game that I would have really enjoyed playing.

I suppose the only solution is not to buy any more games. But wouldn't life be boring? I'm very interested in hearing your comments, and would welcome the feature you are considering on this subject.

Terence D Edwards

✪ Publishers are obviously going to continue releasing games that are not finished. The feature we were planning on this problem is now under discussion and will appear in the mag soon. This will give the publishers a chance to defend themselves and answer the many questions we get on this subject.

The simplest way out of this problem for you is to go out and buy a modem. The fast ones aren't expensive these days, and with the ability to download patches from the Internet you can avoid a repeat of the nightmare you had with *Sensi World Cup Edition*.

But there are many other reasons why PC games players should consider a modem to be an essential accessory. Let reader Mr Ivan explain...

HALL OF SHAME

In the January edition of *PC ZONE* (#72) you reviewed Interplay's *Action Hall Of Fame*. You said that the compilation was great, the main reason for this being the inclusion of *MechCommander* (although you did go on to mention the other three games). Well, it's not *MechCommander* that's part of the compilation, but *MechWarrior 2 Mercenaries*. How does this affect the review, and is it still worthy of a 90 per cent-plus score and thus Classic status?

William Curry

✪ It was on a routine call to Interplay that we were told of the impending release of *Action Hall Of Fame*: "What's on it?" we asked. "MDK, I'76, Carmageddon and MechCommander," said Interplay.
"*MechCommander*? Are you sure? It's only been out a couple of months." (We were obviously suspicious.)
"That's what it says here. And it's only £20."
"Can you send us a boxed copy?"
"It's not ready yet, but when it is..."
"Fine. We've got all those games in the office so we'll review it anyway. Now, are you are sure that it's *MechCommander* and not *MechWarrior*?"
"Yep."
"And it's 20 quid?"
"Yep."
One month later...
"Hello, Interplay. You lied. *MechCommander* – where is it? Twenty quid? I don't think so."
"Well that's what it says here."
"But it's out in the bloody shops."
"Is it?"
"Yes."
"Oh. What score did you give it?"
"Ninety-three per cent. But don't worry about it, we'll take 20 per cent off your next release to make up for it. Bye."

No *MechCommander* In *Action Hall Of Fame*, despite recent reports (er, by us).

HAPPY TALK

I am writing to tell everyone what a modem can do to resurrect their love for forgotten games. I completed my copy of *Red Alert* with ease. The multiplayer challenge offered by the computer AI was, to be frank, feeble.It would either attack you at the beginning of the level and demolish you in one move, or let you build a massive army of tanks and then try to defend itself with mere soldiers.

However, I have since discovered the delights of one-to-one gaming via a modem. *Red Alert* against a human opponent takes on a whole new dimension, and the many new levels I can download from the Internet have made my initial purchase seem like even better value for money.

And recently I discovered *Quake II* multiplayer over the Internet. Suddenly, evenings weren't evenings, they were devoted completely to playing *Quake II*. After this I joined the Death Or Glory clan and am presently preparing for the start of the DeathMatch league.

As you can see, a modem can revive old games and bring another dimension to their newer counterparts. There are only two things I need to point out before you rush out to buy that hardware: 1) be prepared for a massive phone bill; 2) don't expect to see the brightness of the sun for days.

You have been warned.
Mr Ivan

✪ Couldn't have put it better myself.

HACK OFF

I was just reading one of your old mags about online cheating and felt I had to voice my opinion. I've been playing *Jedi Knight* on the IGZ for a while now, and the amount of hacking that goes on is unbelievable. I have no problem with hackers who only play with other hackers to increase enjoyment, but I can't stand those who enter my games to mess everything up. Some hackers continually return to the game and get kicked out, but they slowly mess the game up. You said in the article that detection methods are improving, but I haven't really seen any

evidence of this. Something really must be done. I'm currently playing MP *Wargasm*, but I'd say it's only a matter of time before that starts to be hacked up too. The IGZ, Heat.net and Mplayer should ban hackers before it gets any worse.
Michael, Dublin

✪ In our experience, hackers and people who cheat in online games are finding it increasingly difficult to survive for any reasonable length of time. For example, Origin penalise *Ultima Online* cheats by locking them out of the system permanently, and Battle.net has one of the most sophisticated online security systems we've seen to date. We know hacking is still a problem in certain areas, but we expect the situation to improve considerably over time.

MORE PLEASE

In your Xmas issue (#71) you had a second cover CD with every *Quake* mod, map, demo etc. I liked it so much that I still keep it along with genuine games. I've used it countless times and still speak to people on the Net who tell me: "I also got some cool *Quake* mods. I got them from a *PC ZONE* issue a while ago." I know quite a few people who bought that issue just for the cover CD. In the next few months could you build up another one like that for either *Quake II* or *Unreal*, or even *Half-Life* if there are enough mods by then? Me and the rest of the *Quake* community would be very grateful. Thanks.
Jonathan Mayshar

The *ZONE Quake* CD proved enormously popular. Expect another 3D shoot 'em up special in the near future.

✪ There aren't enough mods and TCs out there at the moment to justify another CD, but we are constantly monitoring the situation, and as soon as this changes we will indeed

endeavour to produce another CD packed with 3D shoot 'em up treats for your continued entertainment.

Privateer 2 in 'top Elite clone shocker'. Roll on *Privateer 3*.

THE FINAL FRONTIER?

The thing that came to me from reading your Space Combat Supertest article (*PCZ* #72) was how much I missed my long-gone copy of *Frontier* and the ST I ran it on. Sad but true. Bloody awful in most respects, but there was a lot of variety loaded onto that one diskette.

I wonder if Electronic Arts would consider some of the elements of *Frontier* for *Privateer 3*? (Assuming there will be one!) Lose the FMV and the plot, and go instead for a big galaxy to explore, chopping and changing between careers, getting medals from both sides, landing on moons and asteroids which you could then mine for minerals, and so on. I particularly liked the idea of changing your ship to suit the mission. It's fine having a big ship with 12 crewmen, big guns and loads of shields, but the option to fly a smaller, weaker ship which will get you around faster is always welcome.

Frontier had some brilliant ideas. Combine them with the playability and gorgeous graphics of *Privateer 2* and I reckon EA would have a winner on their hands.
Simon Towner

✪ To our knowledge, EA currently have no plans to make *Privateer 3*. However, Digital Anvil are currently working on a game called *Freelancer* for Microsoft, and that promises to deliver everything you're asking for and more. We can but wait and hope.

SPACED OUT

I've just bought *Half-Life* (due to lack of RAM I'm unable to play it – sob), and I'm writing to complain about the size of the game – 420Mb of my hard drive is stuffed full of it! Why isn't there a minimal CD install option like just about every other game? Couldn't the programmers leave the model, sound and texture files in separate directories instead of packing them all into one giant .Pak file? This would also save time for the editors and mad level creators like myself. Apart from that the game looks like it's going to be better than Nell McAndrew smothered in chocolate, and no spoon around. Well, nearly better.
Neil Barrington

✪ Yes, 400Mb is a lot of space to give up on your PC for just one game, but we

can see this becoming a familiar problem as an increasing number of developers assume we all have Pentium IIs with giant hard drives. You can expect this to be particularly true in the case of 3D shoot 'em ups, as they don't lend themselves easily to constant CD accessing, and will always go to your hard drive for storage space whenever possible.

Having said that, we can forgive Valve this little misdemeanour, as *Half-Life* is one of the few games that's genuinely worth freeing up space for.

We can't comment on your Nell McAndrew analogy, other than to say you'll definitely find *Half-Life* has been well worth waiting for when you finally get round to playing it. PCZ

SHORT BUT SWEET

Keep your letter short and you're more likely to get a reply in *PC ZONE*

✪ A few things I noticed about the *PC ZONE* crew: Paul Mallinson looks like that guy from The Beautiful South; Warren Chrismas looks like he's got a permanent hangover; and Charlie Brooker looks… like a complete and utter git. And yes, I am perfect.
Thief

No you're not.

✪ I just wanna say thanks for the excellent info concerning the *Carmageddon II* demo on your excellent cover CD with the January issue. By changing a few things I could drive all the cars except the Volvo truck. And just as I was getting tired of the mindless violence… Naaahhhh!
Micheál Rea

✪ This is the first email I've ever sent. I just want to say how much I like your magazine. I've just bought my first PC after being brought up on the Sinclair Spectrum, Megadrive and PlayStation. I've read lots of magazines over the years, from *Crash* to *PC ZONE*, and I have to say yours is the most informative and well laid out. Keep up the good work.
Shay Elliott

Glad to be of service.

✪ About six months ago you said that *Command & Conquer: Tiberian Sun* was going to be released in July '98. So in July I saved up 35 quid, only to find that it was coming out in November. Again I saved up another 35 quid, but then I found out that its new release date is February '99. What the hell is going on? Could you please give me some info on the game, because I know a few people who want to play it but are pissed off because it keeps on being postponed.
Timothy Jenkins

We can only give you the information we get from publishers regarding release dates. *Tiberian Sun* (previewed on page 42) was scheduled for a March release last we heard, but it now looks like it could be April. We'll let you know exactly when the game will be released when we've got finished code in our hands for review.

✪ In the 'We Say' bit of the recommended specs in your reviews,when you say '3D card' do you mean any old 3D card? Would a bog standard 3Dfx Voodoo card suffice?
Charles

Yes.

GSI
GENERAL SIMULATIONS
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F-16 AGGRESSOR

40 OF THE MOST LIFE-LIKE MISSIONS YOU'LL EVER FLY.
"92%"- PC ZONE. AVAILABLE ON PC CD ROM.

New graphics engine = you may need a Pentium III to get the most out of it, especially if it's to look as good as this.

TIME TO GET BACK IN THE ZONE WITH
BATTLEZONE II

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

DEVELOPER Pandemic Studios
PUBLISHER Activision
EXPECTED RELEASE DATE Autumn (TBC)

IN SUMMARY

BattleZone II is the sequel to the critically acclaimed action/strategy hybrid that's got about as much to do with the original arcade game as stale cake and judo. It is in fact the next in the series of action/strategy hybrid games from developers Pandemic Studios.

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

A new graphics engine, improved artificial intelligence, and new subterranean and underwater levels should be enough to convince Quake and C&C fans alike that BattleZone II is worth getting excited about.

POTENTIAL PITFALLS

Is it a first-person, tank-based action game, or a 3D real-time strategy-fest? Despite the success of its predecessor, many still believe that it's impossible to mix the two genres successfully.

The nation's best-loved action/strategy hybrid is set to make a welcome return later this year

⭐ **HAVING A SHERMAN** Jeremy Wells

C&C: Flymo Alert?

"Last one to the tree and back is a big girl..."

The fight moves from the outer reaches of the solar system to new alien worlds.

With built-in headlights, you can use this lawnmower at night.

Expect a slew of new vehicles to take into battle.

➲ Now *that's* what you call a lawnmower.

Hopefully the developers will put more effort into the AI this time around.

Before you go misty-eyed about green wireframes, old-sized ten pence pieces and the pros and cons of a double joystick control system, let's make it clear that *BattleZone II* is *not* the sequel to the seminal '80s arcade classic, but the next in the series of action/strategy hybrid games from newly formed developers Pandemic Studios.

Fans of the original crossbreed will be only too pleased to hear that while the original design team have since left Activision, they have had the foresight to stay together, form their own development studio and sign the next 18 months of their collective lives to the American publisher in order to produce a sequel to their original ground-breaking effort.

Boasting a new, much prettier 3D graphics engine designed to take advantage of the latest 3D accelerator kit, *BattleZone II* is certainly a lot kinder on the eye than the previous effort. While the game interface and core AI are essentially the same, both areas have benefitted from prolonged testing, and Pandemic have actively sought comments and criticisms levelled at *BattleZone* (*PCZ* #62, 81%) via their website (**www. pandemicstudios.com**) in an effort to make sure that the sequel is as user-friendly as possible.

> **❝Boasting a new, much improved 3D graphics engine, *BattleZone II* is certainly a lot kinder on the eye than the previous effort❞**

In an attempt to broaden the appeal of *BattleZone II*, Pandemic are designing the game to appeal to strategists who lack the twitch reflexes necessary to successfully pilot a hover-tank, by introducing the option to play the game without having to stretch that trigger finger at all. At the same time, rocket jockeys who thrive on being at the centre of the action can concentrate on raising their kill count thanks to more 'intelligent' friendly units who are now more than capable of looking after themselves. New and improved AI routines that prioritise and monitor each unit's performance mean that CPU-controlled units should be more adept at pathfinding, and possess the ability to assess and repair any damage, leaving you free to kick enemy butt rather than babysit sick units.

Several new units, including tanks, infantry and mobile assault groups, are promised, and this time you are prompted to look at the bigger picture, with base development and resource management playing a much larger part in the overall long-term strategy. You will also be encouraged to make better use of the more varied terrain on offer, and take full advantage of the network of tunnels, deep, moving rivers and lush foliage that populate the richer, more detailed game worlds.

Those with access to the Net or a LAN will be pleased to hear that the much-loved multiplayer experience that proved so popular with *BattleZone* fans will also benefit from a slew of new options: co-operative play against CPU-controlled opponents, a new twist on the traditional Capture the Flag-style scenario, and an instant action mode that enables you to hone your multiplayer skills, as well as the traditional one-on-one melees.

Although not scheduled for release until much later this year, *BattleZone II* is already shaping up to be one of the year's most keenly awaited titles, and one that we at *PC ZONE* will be monitoring very closely indeed. PCZ

You can tinker with the car's engine and gearbox set-up between stages.

TV-style replays should make *Rally Masters* a joy for spectators.

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

DEVELOPER Digital Illusions
PUBLISHER Gremlin Interactive
EXPECTED RELEASE DATE May

IN SUMMARY

Loads of licensed front-, rear- and four-wheel drive cars, teams and drivers; half a dozen different 'real world' locations; super-detailed graphics; 'shit off a shovel' frame rate thanks to a new game engine; multiple format racing including the opportunity to race head-to-head against the CPU or a chum or eight (over a LAN)

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

Rally Masters is the next game from Swedish developers Digital Illusions, the people who gave us the blisteringly quick *Motorhead* (PCZ #63, 90%). With this kind of ancestry, things are looking really good for rally fans

POTENTIAL PITFALLS

There are already heaps of excellent driving games available for the PC, so *Rally Masters* will have to go some to make the same kind of impact as *Gran Turismo* on the PlayStation

MOTORING AHEAD WITH RALLY MASTERS

Does the PC really need another driving game? It does when the game looks this good

● BELTING UP Jeremy Wells

If it ends up as fast as *Motorhead* and looking this good, it's see ya Colin.

Expect some spectacular *Carmageddon*-style crashes.

Great news for arcade fans: as well as traditional against-the-clock races, there are also head-to-head races.

The Subaru (left) and Peugeot 306 (right) are among the numerous superbly detailed cars you can drive in *Rally Masters*.

o say that there's no lack of decent driving games for the PC is a pretty obvious statement. Whether your penchant is for Formula One, touring car, super-car or table-top racing, you're pretty well catered for. Up until now, Codemasters' *Colin McRae Rally* (PCZ #68, 93%) has been the game of choice for most rally fans, and to be honest it's going to take something special to knock it off the top spot.

Undeterred, Gremlin Interactive have decided to enter the fray. A crazy decision, you might think. Except that they have a secret weapon – Swedish developers Digital Illusions, the no doubt very blonde and healthy-looking bunch of chaps who brought us the rather excellent and unusually monikered arcade racing spectacular known as *Motorhead* (PCZ #63, 90%) a year or so ago.

Far from resting on their laurels, sitting around in saunas, listening to The Cardigans and drinking copious quantities of absinthe, they've been beavering away developing an even quicker game engine that's capable of chucking even more detail around your monitor screen.

What this translates to in real terms is mouth-watering to say the least. Not only does *Rally Masters* sport superbly detailed cars and scenery, but there's also real-time

before you can say Mark Thatcher your headlights have smashed into tiny shards and your gearbox has decided to call it a night. Yep, you've got real-time mechanical failure to contend with too.

But it's not all bad news. As well as

66 Not only does it sport superbly detailed cars and scenery, but there's also real-time car damage and sexy weather and lighting effects to behold 99

car damage and sexy weather and lighting effects to behold. Spin off while careering down a snow-capped, pine-lined mountain track and you see bits flying off your car and panels being dented quicker than you can say 'Vorsprung durch technic'. Swerve off course in the dead of night while speeding through the desert and

a garage full of different licensed and badged cars and teams to choose from, you get an orally effervescent co-driver to keep you heading in the right direction, and the facility to roll up your sleeves between stages and tinker with your car's engine and gear set-up and choose the best tyres for the job.

Those of you who find the prospect of racing against the clock a lonely and somewhat dull affair will be pleased to hear that as well as the traditional rally sprint-style shenanigans, there's also the opportunity to compete in knock-out head-to-head racing, a CPU/multiplayer championship or CPU/multiplayer duels. Special attention has been paid to recreating realistic individual driver AI (or so we're told), and 3D sound should help those with the relevant kit to keep a check on who's in their blind spot when speeding into those difficult bends. Finally, TV-style replays enable each driver to relive past glories or disasters in frame-by-frame fashion.

All in all, it sounds rather jolly. Suffice to say we'll be keeping a close eye on the game's development – as no doubt will Codemasters. PCZ

WIN! THE ENTIRE **TOP TEN GAMES** P.30

TECH-HEAD
A major announcement from Intel, and a joystick/hat thingy
P.22

ONLINE ZONE
Mankind online, game piracy via the Net, and more
P.28

FREE FORTRESS

We'll just have to wait for *Team Fortress II*.

Something to keep us going while we wait for *Team Fortress II* to appear: Valve have already successfully ported the original *Quake* version of *Team Fortress* over to *Half-Life* and plan to release it as a free download. In fact as you read this, *Team Fortress Classic* should already be available. Incidentally, much of the old code should remain the same, including character classes and weapon damage. There aren't that many new features, but you can expect to see two new maps, the ability to crouch, and a more user-friendly interface. You can find details at **www.sierrastudios.com/games/halflife**.

While we're on the subject of add-ons, Monolith have announced details of add-ons for their two 3D shooters, *Blood II* (PCZ #72, 88%) and *Shogo: Mobile Armour Division* (PCZ #71, 92%).

To be released in April, *Shogo: Legacy Of The Fallen* introduces eight new mechas and eight enemy characters, while the as yet untitled *Blood II* pack features more levels reminiscent of the original *Blood*. The robed cultists make a welcome return, in addition to two new monsters and extra weapons, the flayer and

auto-shotgun. The *Blood II* pack arrives next month, although unfortunately you'll have to part with hard currency to get hold of both add-ons. In addition to those, *Wages Of SiN*, the official *SiN* mission pack, should be in the shops now.

Homage to *Blood*'s Circus level.

BLIZZARD STILL WITH CENDANT

You may remember a passing comment in the Xmas issue (#71) of *PC ZONE* where we implied that Blizzard had parted company with Cendant. This, happily, was complete bollocks, and we apologise profusely to both Blizzard and

Cendant for the mistake.

While on the subject, we also had a pop at *Half-Life*'s number three position in the sales chart last month. We would like to point out that it was behind *Tomb Raider III* and *FIFA 99*, two of the

biggest franchises in games history, so a) *Half-Life*'s position was not surprising, and b) we were only bemoaning the fact that it deserved to be Number One anyway. If you haven't bought it already, go and do so now.

THE BIG FIGHT

It's on. Again. *Unreal Tournament* takes on *Quake III Arena* at its own game

⭐ **RINGSIDE** Richie Shoemaker

Quake III vs Unreal Tournament

In the poo-brown corner, *Quake III Arena*...

I t's always fun to pitch two heavyweights together – even more so when both games are set to appear within weeks of each other. Soon after iD announced that a *Quake III Arena* test version would be available for download in March, Epic went one better and said that *Unreal Tournament* would be finished and out of the door at the same time. The aim, of course, being to steal some of *Quake III*'s thunder.

On the face of it, both titles are trying to achieve the same aim. By ditching the traditional single-player game where levels are completed in linear fashion, both developers are focusing their efforts on creating glorified botmatches. In both games the goal is to become top dog by defeating human and computer-controlled opponents. While both titles offer a range of deathmatch variations and a heady mix of weapons – new and old – there's one significant difference between them: *Quake III* – new engine; *Unreal Tournament* – old. 'Nuff said?

Well, no. *Tournament* has the advantage that it probably requires a less hefty PC and that it's likely to include more in the way of game variation. *Quake III*, for all its technical wizardry, seems as brown as the first game, and for your troubles you're going to need a P200 and a 3D card. Even then *Quake III* may well prove choppy.

Some gamers may feel inclined to dismiss *Unreal Tournament* on the grounds of its predecessor's poor multiplayer game, preferring instead to await *Arena*'s final release. However, where both games should succeed is in the AI department. Epic have already proved themselves. iD haven't, but they are no doubt fully aware of past failings and will be pulling out all the stops.

Whatever happens in the final round, the stage is set for a mighty conflict. Who will emerge the victor? Who cares. Even if the judges declare a draw, it's us, the gamers, who always win in the end. PCZ

...and in the snot-green corner, *Unreal Tournament*. Seconds out...

The *Quake III* engine is destined to put all others to shame. Just look at those curves.

Tournament includes teamplay bots for deathmatch games, but then so will *Arena*.

prepare for a daring manoeuvre

In the near future, we'll be launching a title that's going to drive you wild with ecstasy. So prepare yourself for something very special. And try to keep a grip.

Survival of the fastest. Coming soon

PC CD

EIDOS
INTERACTIVE

www.eidosinteractive.co.uk

OWEN DROPPED

But Dalglish is back in the squad with this latest footie game

Silicon Dreams' third footie game in less than a year, following *WLS '98* (*PCZ* #65, 70%) and *Michael Owen's WLS '99* (*PCZ* #72, 84%) is *UEFA Champions League*, a football game based on the most glamorous and high-profile club competition in the world. All the teams from this season's tournament are included, as well as all the past winners of the European Cup. So if you think today's players are a bunch of overpaid pansies compared to yesterday's greats, you can prove it by pitching the 1977 Liverpool team against last year's Real Madrid side. You can create an All-Time Greatest team of your own and alter history in real-life scenarios. You can also expect new moves and an obligatory improved graphics engine. We'll have to wait until spring, however, to see whether Man United can beat Inter Milan, or if *UEFA CL* can beat *FIFA '99* (*PCZ* #71, 92%).

Commentary comes courtesy of Bob Wilson, Ron Atkinson and Brian Moore.

The shadows have a life of their own.

Play in some of the grandest stadiums in Europe.

How hard will it be to score goals like this in *UEFA CL*?

UEFA CL features 95 squads of 25 players each.

DESERT ISLAND CDS

If Chris Kingsley, technical director at Rebellion Studios (currently working on *Aliens Vs Predator*), was marooned on a desert island with nowt but a PC, an unlimited power supply and five games, which games would he choose?

- ✪ **SIM CITY** (Maxis/EA)
- ✪ **CIVILIZATION** (MicroProse)
- ✪ **WARCRAFT 2** (Sierra) *
- ✪ **MYTH** (Eidos)
- ✪ **ALIENS VS PREDATOR** (Fox)
- * Choice if allowed only one.

Comment

"In the absence of a Woman Friday (and a woman for all the other days of the week), I guess I'll have lots of time on my hands, so I really want games with longevity and replay value. I've picked *AvP* because when I go on sunny holidays I normally get bitten by lots of insects, and this is my chance for revenge!

"If someone held a gun to my head and I really had to choose one, and I wasn't allowed to choose *AvP*, I would probably have to pick *WarCraft 2*.

SHORTS

TOP TITUS

French publishers Titus, who last year bought UK developers Digital Integration, have snapped up the rights to the lucrative *Top Gun* licence. Although there are no details at the moment Titus have announced that their first game will be a 3D flight simulation. No, really.

Top Gun: Hornet's Nest, from MicroProse, is reviewed on page 82.

SATAN'S BALLS

Originally dropped to make room for the *Duke Nukem* table, Devil's Island is a new pinball table for existing owners of *Balls Of Steel* (*PCZ* #62, 70%). Developers Wildfire hope to make the table freely available for download from their website. Check out www.wildfire.com.au for more details.

CM3 UPDATE

In last month's review we stated that *Championship Manager 3* needed a beefy PC. While this is true for players wanting to run the game firing on all features, the development team have since optimised the code further to enable you to run a single league in creamy smoothness on a P133 with 32Mb RAM. Which is nice.

LITTLE GREEN MEN

After the disappointment of the original *Army Men* (*PCZ* #66, 41%), where your little plastic soldiers were as intelligent as their real-life counterparts, it's with some relief that we can report that the sequel is looking far more promising. The setting has been moved to the *Micro Machines* and *Toy Story* environments it was more suited to, with bedroom floors, gardens and kitchen sinks all providing their own unique perils. We only hope that 3DO Studios can improve on the original's clumsy control system and weak AI. *Army Men II* should be out before Christmas.

A good soldier never leaves a man behind, even if he smells of charred plastic.

The castle is under siege! Quick, hide under the bed!

SOMEBODY'S WATCHING YOU

Orwellian paranoia meets 3D adventure

Following on from George Orwell's novel *1984*, *Big Brother* is a 3D adventure where, as ex-soldier Eric Blair, you must find your girlfriend Emma, who may or may not have been whisked away by the Thought Police for terminal mind-scrubbing. In constant view of Insoc telescreens you must interact with proles, criminals and Party members to discover the truth – unless you'd prefer to end up in Room 101. Endorsed by The Orwell Estate, *Big Brother* moves the adventure into the realms of first-person shoot 'em ups, and may well prove to be another game that saves the adventure genre from distinction. Developed by MediaX, *Big Brother* should arrive this spring.

"I've been waiting for a decent adventure for years."

A 3D adventure with a decent engine.

1940s London meets 1980s paranoia.

Fall in here and you might get a nasty scratch or two.

Catering for every 3D card under the sun is always a good thing.

EXHAUSTED

If someone offered you a game racing the fastest cars known to man, across real-world locations in Europe and North America, and you could tinker about with settings to get the upper hand against computer-controlled cars, you'd say: "Wow, that's original." Well, that's *Sports Car GT* from EA. The one major selling point is that the game features more than 50 cars and teams. If you're interested, it's out in the spring. Good screenshots though.

Starting at the back of the grid. Ironic, isn't it?

GAMES ARE EVIL – OFFICIAL

"My ten-year-old son believes that he is immortal, and I'm having to teach him that games are not reality, people do die." That's just one quote from a recent survey into the attitudes of the British family towards computer games. The NOP survey, commissioned by Blue Byte, also found that 90 per cent of boys aged between ten and 16 have played a 'violent computer game', and that 70 per cent of girls believe violent games make children violent as a result.

Strong words indeed, but at no point are we given a precise definition of 'violent'. Shooting people in the face is violent; fat plumbers jumping on squirrels isn't. Neither, it seems, were any games players over the age of 18 interviewed. From our experience games just make you obese and uncommunicative, no matter what age you are. Whatever, expect the crackdown to begin in earnest.

This man makes you go out and kill people.

YOUR MOST WANTED

A look at the games you're most looking forward to over the next few months, and when they're supposed to arrive

1	Team Fortress II (Valve/Sierra)	May
2	Aliens Vs Predator (Fox)	April
3	C&C: Tiberian Sun (Westwood/EA)	March/April
4	Quake III Arena (iD/Activision)	April (TBC)
5	Alpha Centauri (Firaxis/EA)	End Feb
6	Duke Nukem 4Ever (3D Realms/GT)	Mid-'99
7	Driver (Reflections/GT)	March
8	Kingpin (Interplay)	April
9	Warzone 2100 (Eidos)	April
10	Diablo II (Blizzard/Sierra)	Autumn

WIN! Submit your vote and go into the hat for a mystery prize draw. Email us at **letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk** with the subject line **'Most Wanted'**, or write to the usual address.

COVENTRY GOD, IVOR!

Famous for the naked bird on a horse, a cryptic ring road and loads of Hitler's unexploded bombs

⭐ **SENT TO COVENTRY** Craig Vaughan **PHOTOGRAPHY** Fiona Wilson

WHO LIVES IN A CITY LIKE THIS?

GEORGE HEIGHTON
18, computer science student

So what brings you into Game? Looking for something specific?
"I'm after the *Star Wars* expansion disc, *Balance Of Power*."
But you're loitering by the *X-Files* game. Didn't you pick it up?
"Yes. I've got a copy at home, but I swear I never bought it. It was a gift. I got curious so I played it, and got stuck on the last level. I thought there might be some clues on the box. Listen, you won't tell anyone, will you?"
Course we won't…

Branches of Game have been a bit erratic with our roving reporters, and the city of Coventry has never won any awards for its hospitality either, so it was with a degree of trepidation that we travelled down the A45 on a freezing, snow-swept winter's morning. Thankfully our fears proved totally unfounded, because this store, situated in the West Orchards shopping centre, proved to be a Mecca for both hospitality and style.

Although there's strong local competition from Virgin, HMV and Electronic Boutique, Game continues to go from strength to strength, aided by the informal atmosphere generated by the store's new manager, 25-year-old Robert Hunt. His philosophy is simple: "I employ approachable and knowledgeable staff who try to be the gamers' friends. We get a lot of repeat custom because people know they can trust us. Our secret is that we're games mad. We play the titles we're selling, so if someone's about to buy a turkey we'll tell them and suggest an alternative. Folk respect that and value our expertise."

So what are the best sellers at the moment?

"*Half-Life* sold tons, even outstripping *Tomb Raider III* initially, and *Gangsters* has done brisk business too. *SiN* has been popular as well, but it's clear that everyone's waiting for *CM3* and *Tiberian Sun*."

Looking to the future, Robert predicts: "I think 3D cards are going to be big this year. Technology means they're getting cheaper and faster, and graphically PCs are leaving the PlayStation standing. We'll be doing the Dreamcast on its UK launch, and the competition is good news for everyone."

Don't mess with the management.
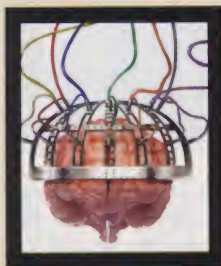
TECHHEAD

A major announcement from Intel, and a, er… plastic joystick hat thingy

WORDS Warren Chrismas

PENTIUM II RIP

Chip giants Intel finally announce details on the all-new Pentium. Yep, your PC is now out of date

Intel have finally unveiled full details on their next generation of microprocessors which are set to replace the company's Pentium II series. Sticking with the recognised brand name, the new processors – which were previously known by the code name of Katmai – are to be called, yes, Pentium IIIs.

Initially available in speeds of 450MHz and 500MHz (but likely to hit 600MHz and above by the end of the year), Pentium IIIs are expected to be available from early March. No official pricing details have been announced but the processors are likely to cost little more than high-end Pentium II equivalents (around £325 and £465 respectively), with price drops expected as production increases through springtime.

Aside from a basic speed improvement, the major development in the Pentium III series is the inclusion of 70 brand new built-in instructions designed specifically for improved video, audio and 3D graphics. These extensions are similar to – but incompatible with – the 3DNow! extensions used by rival chip manufacturer AMD in their K6-2 processor series, and the ill-fated MMX extensions previously used by Intel themselves.

Games will, of course, need to be programmed to take advantage of these extra features. While no developers had made specific announcements at the time of going to press, most major players in the games industry are expected to

support the enhanced functionality, with many likely to release software patches for existing titles.

Upgrading from a Pentium II processor should be relatively easy for owners of motherboards using Intel's BX chipset, although you may well need to obtain a BIOS update from the motherboard manufacturer before slotting in a Pentium III.

Intel: 01793 431155 / www.intel.com

FACTCANNON

British manufacturers Pace (0990 561001) are the latest company to launch a 3Dfx Banshee-based 2D/3D graphics accelerator. The 3D Edge, which costs £99, features a TV-out socket (a SCART lead is provided) and is bundled with a full copy of *Wargasm*. Vouchers entitling you to buy three further games (from a choice of ten) for £13.95 are also included. The list includes *Unreal*, *Forsaken*, *Hexen II*, *F-22: TAW* and *BattleZone*.

S3 have signed a ten-year cross-licensing deal with Intel which will enable the latter to use the graphic chip designer's technology in future chipsets. Meanwhile, Fujitsu (01344 475720) have announced that they will be using S3's Savage3D graphics accelerators in their new line of high-end multimedia PCs targeted at gamers.

Belarc have developed a browser plug-in which enables you to analyse the condition and performance of your hard drive. BelDrive, which is compatible with *Internet Explorer* and *Netscape Navigator*, makes use of SMART (Self-Monitoring Analysis and Reporting Technology), a technology built into most modern ATA/IDE hard disks. You can download it and use it for free from **http://yourpc.net/harddrives.html**.

⟸ The UR Gear: you think it looks stupid? Hey, try wearing it.

HATS OFF

It's a joystick! It's a mouse! You wear it on your head!

UR Gear • £60 • Union Reality • 0181 699 7234

The UR Gear (right) was originally launched (and universally ignored) a year or so ago. Now it's back and this time it's got game support, which, as I'm sure you'll agree, is a good thing for a gaming peripheral to have.

What is it exactly? Well, it's actually a head-mounted digital controller. No, really. It hooks up to your PC via keyboard, serial and game ports (pass-through sockets mean you don't have to permanently disconnect anything) and works via a supplied infra-red receiver.

It can – in theory at least – be used *instead* of a joystick (or indeed a mouse), so that when, say, you move your head right or forwards, you move right or forwards in the game. You can perform actions by using the supplied single-handed controller which features four buttons as well as a throttle slider. We tried it with *Quake II* and, as you can

probably imagine, it doesn't make a lot of sense. It certainly doesn't make the game easier or any more fun.

Alternatively, the UR Gear can be used in conjunction with another controller so that in a flight sim or driving game, for example, you can use a joystick or the keyboard to steer, and simply turn your head to look around the cockpit.

"But how can I turn 90 degrees and still see the screen?", you may be wondering. Well, you don't, smart arse. You set it up (via simple sliders in the Control Panel) so that relatively small movements of the head equals big movement in the game.

We tested it with *F-22: TAW* and *Wargasm* and found that as an alternative to using the home keys on a keyboard or a 'coolie' (directional) hat on a joystick it works well – you have directional control and you don't have to think about it.

But really that's as far as the practical uses go. Other features such as the built-in microphone and supplied voice recognition software certainly don't serve any use to most of us, and it's definitely not suitable as a replacement for a joystick or mouse.

Still, at least the built-in headphones mean you won't be able to hear the laughs and taunts from friends and family – the biggest problem with the UR Gear is that it looks bloody ridiculous. We can't help thinking that the technology would have been better employed in a baseball cap, or even some over-sized shades.

PCZVERDICT   **67%**

Never trust a man with green eyes.

The media sharks are already circling.

DAIKATANA: ION STORM'S LAST HOPE?

An early Beta of *Daikatana* rolls into the office – just as dark clouds roll over Ion Storm

⊗ **STORMING** Richie Shoemaker

It's all going horribly wrong. Not that anyone's about to admit it, but after Ion Storm have leaked employees steadily for months, the consensus on their future is that if *Daikatana* bombs, the explosion will take John Romero and Dallas-based Ion Storm along with it.

Even though some commentators are already sharpening the knives, there's little doubt that most gamers are keeping faith with the industry's most conspicuous personality. Even on the strength of the early Beta version it's clear that *Daikatana* will be big. But the question is: how big?

The first thing to strike us when *Daikatana* kicked into life was that, considering the code wasn't fully optimised, the game runs incredibly smoothly – more so than even *SiN* and *Half-Life*. Secondly, the environments look stunning.

Daikatana is a traditional first-person game in most respects, but by being set in four time periods (ancient Greece, medieval Norway and futuristic Japan and San Francisco), it features more innovative weapons and intelligent foes than any other game of its type.

SLIPPING AWAY

However, *Daikatana* is still in its early stages. Given the amount of time already spent on development this shouldn't be the case, and from what we've seen there's still a hell of a lot left to do. The AI is currently well below standard, but we can put that down to Ion Storm having to create stable code to send out. Even so, it seems that Ion Storm's last hope may well have missed its window of opportunity – the release date has slipped to June, which means it will be up against stiff competition from *Quake III Arena* and *Duke Nukem 4Ever*. But with their backs to the wall in some respects, Ion Storm are working almost round the clock to get the game into the shops.

Way behind schedule, *Daikatana* is certainly no *Half-Life* (*PCZ* #71, 95%). But even after the recent exodus of key personnel, Ion Storm still have the talent to make the game everything it's been promised to be. Hopefully Romero and his team can weather the storm. **PCZ**

⊕ *See The Man Who Knows on page 32 for more on Ion Storm.*

Ancient Greece in all its architectural glory.

A big orange monster, a distant cousin to *Quake*'s big brown one.

❝*Daikatana* runs incredibly smoothly – more so than even *SiN* and *Half-Life*. Secondly, the environments look stunning❞

ARMOR	HEALTH	AMMO	LEVEL
0	100	40	0

Daikatana has the biggest chaingun yet seen in a shoot 'em up.

BACK TO THE FUTURE

More information has come to light on Metropolis' RPG/adventure game *Gorky 17*. Set in a future where international relations between Russia and NATO are somewhat strained, the game claims to seamlessly mix traditional role-playing elements with turn-based combat and adventure. This means that, for instance, enemies may break off during combat to negotiate a ceasefire, offering vital information in return for their life.

> Combat is turn-based, but don't let that put you off.

Although backgrounds are in 2D, the terrain is affected by weather and weapons, and leaves will even blow through the streets. All the game characters are built up of 3D polygons, however, and incorporate – get this – skeletal animation. More details when they surface.

Explore the derelict Russian town of Gorky 17.

SHORTS

WIZARD ALERT

With *Rage Of Mages* (*PCZ* #72, 80%) still fresh in mind, US publishers Monolith have announced details of *Rage Of Mages 2: Necromancer*. Although not wildly different to the first game, the 43 non-linear missions include 200 new weapons and objects and 52 new races. Release is currently set for April with a second – 3D – sequel later in the year.

DOWN TO EARTH

Three leading members of the *SubSpace* team who left to form Harmless Games have announced a new Net-based multiplayer game, *Infantry*. Like *SubSpace*, *Infantry* utilises a 2D engine and should run on low-end PCs. Unlike *SubSpace*, however, *Infantry* incorporates RPG elements, and characters can team up to use the various ground-based vehicles. Expect a full report soon.

"Take that, Fritz... Er, sorry, wrong war."

TIN CAN ALLEY

The long wait for a decent flight sim based on the Korean War may finally be over. After the awful *Sabre Ace* (*PCZ* #62, 34%) made this conflict a no-fly zone, the creators of *Flying Corps* are about to recommence hostilities. Enabling you to immerse yourself in dogfights, tactical missions and the general dismemberment of Russians, Chinese and North Koreans, *MiG Alley* also features ground troops that react to your actions, plus accurate aircraft from the period. Hopefully there'll be a nearby M.A.S.H. unit to put you back together when you crash. The release date is Q1 1999 – which in marketing speak means March.

Blue dots good, red dots bad.

A semi-transparent plane. Neat.

FALCON™ 4.0

THE WORLD'S FINEST FLIGHT SIMULATION.

"...without doubt, one of the most astounding games we have ever seen"
PC FORMAT

This is the new benchmark in flight simulation technology. Pilot tested for accuracy, **Falcon 4.0** models the Block 50/52 F-16C; the most versatile and unrivalled production fighter in existence. Master the F-16C using numerous training missions that range from the 'basics of flight' to 'advanced dogfighting' and combat over the Korean Peninsula in real-time dynamic campaigns.

FALCON 4.0

CD-ROM

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www.microprose.com

HASBRO Interactive

ONLINEZONE

The Web is home to many of the old classics. It's also home to the SPA, whose job it is to make you stop using them

⭐ **NET GURU** Phil Wand

Six months ago, something called Abandonware was big on the Net. Essentially it referred to commercial software – games, utilities, business applications, you name it – that was over four years old, no longer supported by the publishers and, if we're being honest, criminally shit. Since that time, the Software Publishers Association (SPA) have donned their hobnailed boots and stomped on countless sites in North America – not for distributing PC games that made a Nintendo GameBoy look like sophisticated Martian technology, but because said games represented a massive breach of intellectual property rights. Old or young, crap or brill, someone actually *owned* the software that people were

Believe it or not, *SimCity Classic* runs in a standard web browser.

downloading by the truckload, and it had to stop.

On the face of it, it all seems rather absurd. I mean, nobody in their right mind would part with money for any of the games that were on offer, and nobody would bother selling them in the first place. Would they? Well, no and no. But that's not the point. Point your browser at **www.simcity. com** and you may soon begin to

see why it's wrong to hand out software simply because you think everyone's forgotten about it. Here, Maxis have taken their original *SimCity* code – ten years old this year – and transferred it seamlessly to the Web. Faithfully reproduced in Java, it runs like a dream and (this is the clever marketing bit) makes you feel that you can't wait for *SimCity 3000* (reviewed on page 76). In other words, not only do you have a blast down memory lane on the reminiscence express, you also leave wanting to hand Maxis a 40-quid cheque.

So next time you start grumbling about intellectual property rights, remember Maxis and remember *SimCity Classic*. I dare say we can look forward to a whole lot more just like this.

NOW PLAYING

One to avoid until it gets sorted out

MANKIND
www.mankind.net
Played exclusively over the Net, Cryo's *Mankind* is a real-time strategy/trading game set in a 3D universe of over 900 million planets. Initially you're given the choice of allying with one of the two main factions that control the galaxy

Mankind looks good but, like *Frontier*, was delivered prematurely.

– you can then get stuck in as a soldier, a merchant, a pirate, or any one of numerous other enticing vocations. There's no set goal, and much of the game is spent governing colonies and shooing rival players from your sector.

There are some major drawbacks though. Not only does the French development team consist of just two wearied programmers, but also the publishers were keen to have the game boxed and on the shelves for the droves of sucker parents at Christmas. A typical scenario entails numerous bugs, incompatibilities and absent subroutines. To cap it all, the interface is perplexing, with badly rendered icons and missing features. Early editions had a small slip of paper saying "See the website" in place of a manual, and the game itself would fall flat on its back if you had an AWE64 or Voodoo board installed.

Our advice: stay well clear until all issues have been addressed. We'll keep you posted.

If only the code behind the cuteness was up to the job.

SPESH SITE OF THE MONTH

One of the better organised *Half-Life* sites out there.

AXG HALF-LIFE
www.axg.net/half-life
Incredibly, one of the greatest games of all time is backed up by a decidedly amateur ring of websites. Most are disorganised and poorly updated; hardly any are worthy of a return visit, let alone a bookmark. A couple do stand out though, with AXG's site winning the laurels. It's hugely informative, continually updated and has a refreshingly uncluttered layout and navigation – Web design wannabes take note. It also boasts all the tricks and treats you need to get the most from your copy of *Half-Life*, together with a bunch of top downloads and Web-based forums area. Off you go.

TOP DOWNLOAD OF THE MONTH

An old but gold concept rendered in DirectX-O-Vision.

DX-BALL 2
www.LongbowDigitalArts.com
Given the fact that Atari's original *Breakout* is 23 years old, you could easily be forgiven for stifling a quiet yawn when presented with an updated version for Windows. After all, there's only so much rebounding of balls and breaking of bricks that you can do in one lifetime. Or is there? *DX-Ball 2* is an unexpectedly addictive revision of the '70s classic, with fluid visuals, a techno soundtrack and heaps of '90s-style power-ups. Hand over $15 (ie under a tenner) and you get 150 stylish new levels to keep you distracted from now until doomsday. Triffic stuff. Get bouncing.

BETACALL 📢

A couple of graphical action adventures in beta this month. Both have the same outward appearance, but have very different goals

⭐ Accolade's forthcoming *Redline* is a 3D combat simulation with ten vehicles and 50 weapons. The online press are raving about it, so go suck it and see.
Website: www.accolade.com/products/redline/openbetaform.htm
Email: redlinedemo@accolade.com

⭐ *Boneyards* is Cavedog's own online multiplayer gaming service, which has only just started its testing period. *TA: Kingdoms* makes a beta appearance some time in March.
Website: www.cavedog.com/boneyards/betaform.html
Email: boneyards@cavedog.com

COR BRINEY

BLUFFER'S Guide to...

FTP

✪ What is it?
File Transfer Protocol (FTP) is the simplest way of transferring files from one computer to another over the Internet. It is an application protocol (ie a way of communicating) that works over TCP/IP.

✪ Why was it created?
FTP was originally designed to enable anyone to copy files between two networked computers – this only worked if you had password access to both machines. So anonymous FTP came along soon after, enabling public access to public archives.

✪ How does it work?
FTP is a means of movement rather than a transportation device – in simpler terms, it's the road and not the car. In order to initiate transfers, you need to log on to a computer that understands the FTP protocol and can accept your requests. Known as FTP servers, these machines are controlled through a simple command line interface, and third-party software (eg FTP *Explorer* or *Bullet Proof FTP*) offers a graphical interface to it.

✪ Where can I find out more about it?
The best place to go is: **www.bpftp.com**.

Naval sims are in vogue

⭐ **SEAMAN STAINES:** Richie Shoemaker

Actually, to say that naval sims are all the rage is an overstatement. They'll never take over the world, especially as they've been few and far between in the last two years – in fact we can't think of a single one, good or bad. Now though, there's a whole armada on the horizon (well, two anyway).

The first, *Fleet Commander,* from military sim specialists Jane's, is essentially a real-time strategy game that combines the accessibility of *C&C* with the realism demanded by die-hard *Harpoon* addicts. Developed by Sonalyst, who previously gave us *688i Hunter Killer, Fleet Commander* dispenses with the squiggly symbols that no one can be bothered to memorise, and incorporates a friendly interface which includes the ability to zoom in on the action in glorious 3D-O-Vision. You can take part in campaigns throughout the world's oceans, taking command of 16 national fleets (and associated aircraft) and mustering more than 150 different vessel configurations.

If you'd rather take part in more close-quarter action, then SSI's spookily similar *Fighting Steel* might be more your bag. Set during WWII, you take command of German, Japanese, American or British fleets and battle it out in a series of historically accurate and user-defined missions. More than 1000 vessels have been faithfully reproduced, and you can fire 50 different guns and 13 different torpedoes. The experience of your crew also comes into play, especially during night-time missions.

Finally we have *Submarine Titans*, which isn't a sub sim at all, but an isometric real-time strategy game that chucks realism overboard and instead goes all *SeaQuest* in bringing resource management to a futuristic subaquatic world.

Sub Titans, from Aussie developers Megamedia, and *Fleet Commander* should hit our shores in the spring, with *Fighting Steel* following on for Christmas. PCZ

Fighting Steel: your turn to sink the Bismark.

Fighting Steel: an altogether safer bet than the Titanic.

Fleet Commander: that's another one on its way to Baghdad.

Submarine Titans: underwater *C&C*, basically.

A CLASSIC LINE FROM *STAR WARS:*

"THE FORCE WILL BE WITH YOU...ALWAYS."

CHARTS

All you need to know about which games are selling by the shed-load, plus the buzz on the streets – where you tell us what *you* think

From out of nowhere, *Baldur's Gate* goes in at Number One!

THE Virgin MEGASTORES TOP 10

JAN	FEB	TITLE	LABEL	GROUP	REVIEW SCORE
-	1	**BALDUR'S GATE**	INTERPLAY	INTERPLAY	85%
4	2	**FALCON 4.0**	MICROPROSE	MICROPROSE	95%
-	3	**CARMAGEDDON II**	SCI	SCI	95%
-	4	**BIGGEST NAMES, BEST GAMES**	EA	EA	NR
3	5	**HALF-LIFE**	SIERRA	SIERRA	95%
5	6	**SOUTH PARK THEME & SCREENSAVER**	TELSTAR	TELSTAR	NR
9	7	**TITANIC**	EUROPRESS	EUROPRESS	NR
1	8	**TOMB RAIDER III**	EIDOS	EIDOS	91%
-	9	**GANGSTERS: ORGANISED CRIME**	EIDOS	EIDOS	58%
-	10	**GRAND THEFT AUTO**	TAKE 2	TAKE 2	92%

THE ChartTrack TOP10 ⊕ ELSPA

JAN	FEB	TITLE	LABEL	GROUP	REV SCORE
-	1	**BALDUR'S GATE**	INTERPLAY	INTERPLAY	85%
3	2	**HALF-LIFE**	SIERRA	CENDANT	95%
1	3	**TOMB RAIDER III**	EIDOS	EIDOS	91%
2	4	**FIFA 99**	EA SPORTS	EA	92%
7	5	**GANGSTERS: ORGANISED CRIME**	EIDOS	EIDOS	58%
4	6	**COMBAT FLIGHT SIMULATOR**	MICROSOFT	MICROSOFT	79%
5	7	**SOUTH PARK THEME & SCREENSAVER**	TELSTAR	TELSTAR	NR
8	8	**COLIN MCRAE RALLY**	CODEMASTERS	CODEMASTERS	93%
-	9	**AGE OF EMPIRES**	MICROSOFT	MICROSOFT	94%
-	10	**SETTLERS III**	BLUE BYTE	BLUE BYTE	88%

(Compiled by Chart Track © ELSPA 1999)

THE BUZZ ON THE STREETS

"Apart from *Baldur's Gate* there's not much happening at the moment, is there? Personally, I'm holding out for *Championship Manager 3* – when that one hits the shops it's going to be huge. Oh, and Arsenal will win the title. Sorry, Chelsea fans."
Mark Smith, London

"*Gangsters* in the Top 10! It's just amazing what a decent game concept with crappy implementation can do. There must be loads of unhappy virtual pimps and hustlers out there."
Jonathan, London

"It's ridiculous – some people have too much money if they can afford to spend £20 on a bloody *South Park* screensaver! Glad to see *Tomb Raider III*'s up there though. A bit old hat maybe, but storming gameplay."
Will, Scarborough

"I'm afraid I'm one of the people that helped *South Park* get where it is. It was kinda fun for a while but nowhere near as much fun as Beavis & Butt-head's *Screen Wreckers*. I've heard the *South Park* game (on the N64) is a bit shit as well. Still, lesson learnt."
Eddy Francis, Edgware

"*Half-Life* sneaking back up again I see, well deserved in my opinion – although it should be at number one. I know *Quake III* will storm the charts, but I can't see another 3D shoot 'em up topping *Half-Life* for quite a while."
Brian Bloodaxe, far from the madding crowd

CHART COMMENT

God's beard! Where did *Baldur's Gate* come from? Well, it's simple really – it's probably just a reflection of the fact that it's a great RPG that appeals to Joe Public as well as Filthy Belch the one-legged dwarf slayer.

It's good to see *Age Of Empires* sneaking in to the Top 10 as well – it shows that some games can stand the test of time, and reiterates the fact that not everyone is wowed by 3D graphics alone – something that is highlighted further by the US chart, rammed full as it is by hunting games. Tragic really.

It's been pretty quiet so far this year, but it will be all change next month as *SimCity 3000* and *Championship Manager 3* slug it out for the top spot. My money's on *CM3*.
Richie Shoemaker

RETRO CHARTS

1 YEAR AGO...
1 **Tomb Raider II** *Core Design/Eidos*
2 **Quake II** *iD/Activision*
3 **FIFA: Road To World Cup** *EA Sports*
4 **Championship Manager 97/98** *Eidos*
5 **Grand Theft Auto** *DMA Design/BMG*

2 YEARS AGO...
1 **C&C: Red Alert** *Westwood/Virgin*
2 **Diablo** *Blizzard/Sierra*
3 **FIFA 97** *EA Sports*
4 **Tomb Raider** *Core Design/Eidos*
5 **Flight Simulator 6.0** *Microsoft*

5 YEARS AGO...
1 **Rebel Assault** *LucasArts/US Gold*
2 **Day Of The Tentacle** *LucasArts/US Gold*
3 **The Journeyman Project** *Gametek*
4 **Dracula Unleashed** *Mindscape*
5 **Super Strike Commander** *Origin/EA*

WINDY CITY, BIG SMOKE

Microsoft go mad in Chicago, while Take 2 get reckless in London

The popularity of law evasion in driving games is at an all-time high, and now Microsoft are to add their name to the list of growing titles with *Midtown Madness*.

The idea from the start was to create a living, breathing city where you race through the streets of Chicago, avoiding pedestrians, traffic jams and lawmen. You are given the freedom of the city with back-street shortcuts a-plenty and a choice of ten vehicles, including police cars, Mustangs and an 18-wheeled truck.

When the game is released in June, *Midtown Madness* will be up against some venerable titles, notably *SpeedBusters* (*PCZ* #72, 85%) and *Need For Speed III* (*PCZ* #69, 91%). Next month also sees the release of *Driver* (see preview on page 50) and *Interstate '82*, not to mention old favourites *Carmageddon II* (*PCZ* #65, 95%) and *Grand Theft Auto* (*PCZ* #58, 92%).

AND THERE'S MORE...
Grand Theft Auto is to receive its first add-on disc. Set in the London of the Swinging '60s, *GTA London* hosts a complete set of new vehicles and missions, with music that suits the period. You can take to the capital's winding streets in Routemaster buses, black cabs and, maybe, the first ever Reliant Robin to grace a driving game. Expect the pedestrians to be stoned, the police to be unarmed, and the BBFC to ban it. Take 2 unleash *GTA London* in April.

Cunning stunt coming up.

You're not supposed to kill people but...

Jumping over the Michigan Avenue Bridge while it's in the 'up' position.

BEYOND QUAKE II

Infinity: The Kai'Ren Threat is a *Quake II* total conversion featuring ten new single-player levels and four new deathmatch arenas. Currently available only as a demo, the game replaces the original *Quake II* arsenal with ten new dual-fire weapons and 15 new monsters to use them on. Watch out for multiple-warhead and guided missiles, as well as the option to play in a first- or third-person perspective. If you've patched up to *Quake II* version 3.20, why not aim your browser at **www.katanasoft.com**.

Infinity: The Kai'Ren: more *Quake II* levels and arena.

...plus new weapons, and new monsters to use them on.
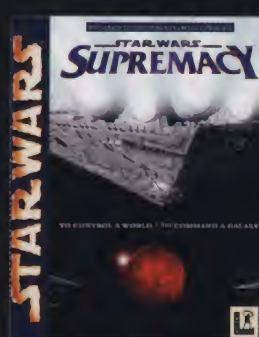
The Man who KNOWS

STORM IN A TEACUP?

Ion Storm are in a **World Of Shit**. It's official. Since signing a multi-million dollar deal with publishers **Eidos**, the Dallas-based developers have been pissing money up the wall while tearing themselves apart from the inside. The heavily delayed **Daikatana** could become the *Heaven's Gate* of the games industry, as latest figures predict that it now has to sell in the region of two and a half million copies simply to break even.

On November 19, the so-called **Ion Eight** – comprising key designers, artists and sound men – walked out, a bombshell that reverberated throughout the development community. Damage limitation was rapidly put into effect, with CEO **Todd Porter** stating: "A lot of people have made a really big deal about this. I look at it as a real positive. The team we have now is incredibly motivated, and incredibly, incredibly talented. The guys we hired to replace them were, you know, heavy-hitters. Some people who left were going to be phased out anyway."

However, a recent feature in US newspaper **The Dallas Observer** gave a more accurate picture, the article incorporating a number of internal emails which had been carelessly left on the Ion Storm company server. As a taster, art director **Jerry O'Flaherty** refers to former partner **Mike Wilson** as a "f**king rat-faced bitch". Which is nice. But the crux of the leaked emails involves a message from Porter to 'the owners' of Ion Storm, following a meeting with Eidos in which the publishers expressed some concerns. Porter summarises the conversation thus: "VERY VERY VERY concerned about *Daikatana* not shipping on time… VERY VERY VERY concerned about people leaving *Daikatana* – though I tried to assure them that most of those who left were shit anyway… VERY VERY VERY concerned about the AI in *Daikatana* and that there is a TREMENDOUS amount left to do… VERY concerned that John's heart is not in *Daikatana*…"

A former Ion Storm employee also offered the following opinion of his former boss: "If you want the overriding problem with **John Romero**'s character, I'd say it was his emphasis on being John Romero in the public eye, rather than getting things done."

Ion Storm's response to the *Dallas Observer* article has been to issue a **subpoena** to get their hands on the emails sent between the author, **Christine Biederman**, and her tell-tale sources. *Dallas Observer* attorneys have filed to repress the subpoena, and lawyers on both side are no doubt rubbing their sweaty palms in anticipation of the money to be made in a drawn-out court battle.

Perhaps they should all get together for a Deathmatch. The tits.

TWIST IN TIME

Stunt car racing, *Micro Machines*-style

⭐ **DRIVING MISS DAISY** Mark Hill

Developed by Carts Entertainment, *Thrust, Twist 'N Turn* and *AD* promise to put a new spin on the racing genre. *TTT* is a futuristic racer with a full 3D environment, enabling you to speed round loops and jump from one layer to another of the eight contortionist tracks. In *AD* you race through the decades in a *Micro Machines V3*-style third-person view, pirouetting from the dirt-track bound '30s to the asphalted motorway '90s. The 12 tracks are completely open, so you can switch bumpy roads for swamps and forests to find shortcuts.

TTT from Take 2 Interactive should be out in March, while *AD* sees the light of day some time in the summer.

In AD, tracks will develop over time.

Thrust, Twist 'N Turn: Take 2's twist on Codemasters' classic.

Something to twist 'n' shout about? Perhaps.

BUILD 'EM UP, KNOCK 'EM DOWN

Extreme Paintbrawl – Oh joy.

It seems that *Duke 3D*'s ancient 3D engine refuses to die, with two new Build-powered games on the horizon. The first is *WWII*, the follow-up to *Nam* from GT Interactive. The second is *Extreme Paintbrawl* from Headgames, a company currently stalking the US charts with a succession of dire hunting games. Both games will no doubt sell by the sackload over there, and will be stripped and hung from the branches of the ugly tree once they arrive here. You have been warned.

TOTAL RECALL

Electronic Arts have recalled 100,000 copies of the PlayStation version of *Tiger Woods 99* after the *South Park* film, *Spirit Of Christmas*, was discovered on the disc – even though it was only accessible to PC users. EA investigators will have to work quickly to discover the saboteur before he finds the infamous 'horsegag.avi' and slips it onto *FIFA 2000*.

"Oh my god, they killed…"

Internet play will support the new janescombat.net.

PIGS WILL FLY

From the same team that brought us *Longbow 2* comes *A-10 Warthog*, based on the pig-ugly tank-busting warplane that earned its wings in the Gulf War. Featuring a new graphics engine and a tree-like mission structure to bump up the replay factor, *A-10 Warthog* looks like being a typical Jane's simulation – aimed squarely at those with homemade force feedback armchairs. For novices though, the game includes detailed tutorial missions to ease you into the cockpit. Due for release in early April, we should be able to bring you a review next issue, on sale Friday 12 March.

3D virtual cockpit fitted as standard.

TICKER TAPE

STARTS++ *X-COM* fans rejoice. After last year's space-combat sim *X-COM Interceptor*, and the forthcoming 3D shooter *X-COM Alliance*, the sixth in the series, *X-COM Genesis*, will be a squad-level strategy game **++STOP++** Latest figures suggest that global PC sales are set to rise by around 15 per cent this year, the biggest single rise for quite some time. Although most of the 106 million projected users wouldn't know one end of a railgun from the other, we can expect PC games sales to take a larger slice of the pie as the PlayStation dies off and Sega's Dreamcast begins to assert itself. Well that's our theory, anyway **++STOP++** April sees the release of *Tales Of The Sword Coast*, a mission disc for *Baldur's Gate* (*PCZ* # 73, 85%). A sequel to the number one RPG is also on the cards **++STOP++** Impressions are working on a sequel of sorts for *Caesar III* (*PCZ* #70, 92%). It's very likely that the new game, *Pharaoh*, will continue in the same real-time vein as its predecessor **++STOP++** Yosemite Entertainment have announced that they're working on an adventure game based on cult sci-fi series *Babylon 5*. The game will utilise the *Unreal* engine **++ENDS**

Over 100 fantasy units, dragons included.

EPIC FANTASY

Continuing in the grand tradition of games like *Heroes Of Might & Magic* (*PCZ* #47, 87%) and *Warlords III* (*PCZ* #67, 90%), Epic's *Age Of Wonders* is a fantasy turn-based strategy game that promises to take the genre to a whole new level (again). As well as a non-linear campaign, the game will feature terrain-deforming spells and diplomacy on a par with *Civ II* – according to developers Kolbitar anyway. No release date has been set for the game as yet.
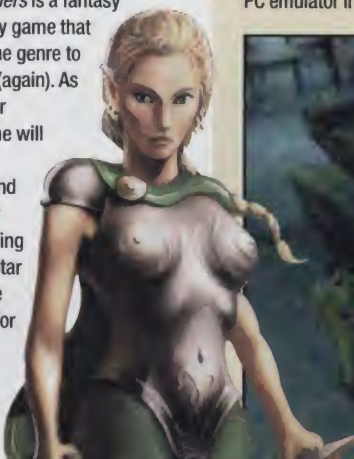
CONSOLE ZONE

Never underestimate the power of a PC

⊗ **EMULATED** Richie Shoemaker

Metal Gear Solid: an emulator might be your only chance of playing it.

Metal Gear Solid is here, well almost – tantalisingly close, in fact. PlayStation mags are already touting it as *the* game of 1999, and our own technical wizard Warren Chrismas went so far as to call it the best game ever, on any platform. Even better than *Half-Life*? Apparently so. Anyway, the question for us PC owners is: Will we ever see a 3D-accelerated version? Perhaps, say publishers Konami. Which basically means… Well, you decide.

Apart from twiddling our thumbs, there is another course of action open to those of us with a modem and a desire to flout international law: go and buy the PSX version and run it through your PC using an emulator. Of course, we wouldn't recommend it. In fact we'd sternly say no, don't do it. Downloading and using any emulator is probably illegal whether you own a PlayStation or not. But just in case you were curious, there is one emulator – *PSEmu* – that not only runs PlayStation games, it also runs them through 3Dfx and Direct3D. It doesn't work on every game yet, and you need a decent PC to get games running at a decent speed, but at least it works some of the time. Another emulator that has just started doing the rounds is *Bleem*. Quite apart from utilising hardware acceleration, *Bleem* looks as if the developers intend it to be a commercial release. If Sony give the go ahead in return for phenomenal amounts of cash, we could all be popping down to Our Price for a £29.99 PlayStation that would make even a Dreamcast look dated. Hoorah!

Unfortunately though, it will probably never happen. At the recent Mac Expo in the States, Connectix unveiled their commercial PSX emulator for the Mac called *Virtual Game Station,* and announced details of a forthcoming PC version. And mighty impressive it was too. So much so, in fact, that Sony could well take them to court for their efforts – although we wait for confirmation. Basically though, if Sony throw their weight around we can kiss goodbye to any hopes of seeing a PlayStation emulator in the PC games chart. What is so perplexing is why Sony would want to dismiss something that could well make them heaps of cash. It's reputed that they lose money on each PlayStation sold anyway, which is why PSX games are so expensive. With emulators they could save money, as well as tap into massive new markets without incurring a cent in development costs. At the time of going to press Sony refused to comment on any impending legal action.

Just a final thought on emulation: Dreamcast – the next-generation super-console, or a PC emulator in a white box? You decide.
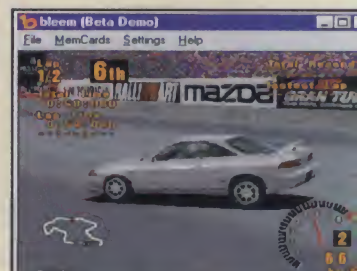
Gran Turismo running on a "friend's PC".

Metal Gear Solid: the game of 1999, according to PlayStation magazines.

HOTSHOTS

In which *PC ZONE* takes a look at hot new games coming your way soon. This month, we've got new screensho
from LucasArts' *X-Wing Alliance*, Eidos Interactive's *Warzone 2100* and Codemasters' *Brian Lara Cricket*

X-WING ALLIANCE

⭐ LucasArts • Out April

LucasArts' 'can't fail' *Star Wars* gaming formula looks set to reap dividends for PC gaming freaks everywhere when *X-Wing Alliance* comes out this Spring. This particular game has two storylines: the primary one focuses on the Rebel Alliance's struggle for survival after bitter defeat by the Galactic Empire in the Battle of Hoth; the secondary story – which runs parallel – is a classic *Star Wars* tale of two rival families caught not only in the middle of the epic military conflict, but battling each other for control of an interstellar trading business. There'll be twice as many craft and objects and the scale of conflict will apparently be doubled. We want it now!
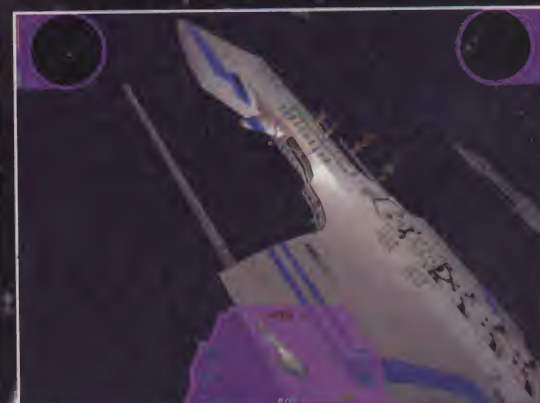
WARZONE 2100

⭐ Eidos Interactive • Out March

We're not too sure about the '3D real-time strategy' revolution happening at the moment, although Pumpkin Studios' forthcoming *Warzone 2100* may change all that. Early demos show that it's more advanced and better looking than *War Of The Worlds* (*PCZ* #72, 85%), but the *PC ZONE* jury will hold fire until a finished version drops into our laps. The game will feature 400-plus technologies to research, over 2000 different units to design, three large campaign maps to conquer and 24 fast-play mission maps for more impatient players. So that's lots, then.

BRIAN LARA CRICKET

⭐ Codemasters • Out March

A playable version of Codemasters' highly anticipated *Brian Lara Cricket* managed to draw a crowd during its recent unveiling at the *PC ZONE* HQ, which is mightily strange for a cricket game. Comments such as "This looks good" (Mallo) and "It's just like watching telly" (Steve Hill) belied the fact that hardly anyone here actually *likes* the sport. Except for Patrick McCarthy, who marks his return to the heady heights of 'computer games reviewer' next month when he delivers his final verdict. So until then...

A whole lotta head-crackin' goin' on in...

KINGPIN

It's time to start talkin' weird: *Charlie Brooker* previews Interplay's sweartastic newie

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Xatrix
PUBLISHER Interplay
WEBSITE www.xatrix.com
OUT Spring

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- Runs on an improved version of the *Quake II* engine, just like *Half-Life*
- Mafia-inspired shoot 'em up with RPG elements
- You get to have sex with everyone you shoot (not really)

"Drew Markham, lead programmer on *Kingpin*, the gaming world's answer to *Goodfellas*: "I got into a gun battle in a stairwell last night. A spiralling, four-storey stairwell – like the one in *Vertigo*, almost. There's armed guys all over this thing. I burst in with my gang, and my guys start yelling at their guys: 'Die, you f***!', and 'F*** you!' and so on. Then the machine-guns start going *bam bam bam*, and there's shots flyin' by, sparks flyin' off the metal, people gittin' whacked all around...

"That was last night. And that was the first time it really hit me: I felt that as this thing comes together, as all the elements congeal, it's really starting to feel like a movie in places. And that kind of creeps me out. But in a good way."

Drew's company, Xatrix, is based in Santa Monica, California. It's a beautiful place populated by beautiful people, blessed by almost ceaseless sunshine. You might expect someone living in such an environment to create upbeat, happy-go-lucky platform games about cartoon rabbits or drawling surf dudes. But no. You know what Drew was getting excited about when we spoke on the phone? Popping people in the forehead with Magnums and dashing people's brains out with lead pipes. Something must be *way* wrong with Drew Markham's mind.

DIDJOO FOGGAM EYE WIFE?

The preoccupation with pipes stems from the game's latest development: the choice of default weapon – the tool you have to rely on in those desperate moments when the ammo runs out. In *Wolfenstein 3D* you had a knife. In *Doom* your fists. In *Quake* the honours went to a squirty little popgun. And in *Kingpin*?

"We had to come up with a default weapon – that's part of the paradigm for any first-person game – and I said I didn't really want to give everybody a *gun* as the default, because then you've gotta give 'em infinite ammo, and that's just not realistic.

And everybody's lookin' at me thinking, 'Oh God, he's not going to suggest a melee weapon, is he?' And I said 'Absolutely.' You know – crowbars, golf clubs, whatever we can come up with."

They eventually settled on the lo-fi murderer's favourite: a *Cluedo*-style chunk of lead piping. Close-up, man-on-man combat is notoriously difficult to pull off in a first-person shooter. The best example so far is the crowbar

> **❝Crackin' somebody in the head with the lead pipe is one of the most brutal things I've ever seen❞**
>
> **DREW MARKHAM, XATRIX ENTERTAINMENT**

in *Half-Life* – a sickeningly proficient cudgel for multiplayer mode. One moment you're flailing away at someone in an accurate frenzy, the next thing you know their skull's opened up like a ripe tulip and there's gooey lumps of brain dripping from your chin. As an emulation of real-life murder, it's reasonable, albeit luridly impressionistic. *Kingpin*'s toe-to-toe butchery is grittier all round. The body of each character is divided into individual 'zones', each of which reacts individually to damage. Smack someone's arm, and the arm buckles; smack their *head* and it looks so damn painful you want to climb through the screen and apologise in person.

"In *Kingpin* you really are making contact and it's... pretty *gnarly*," leers Drew.

"You whip this lead pipe out and start crackin' somebody in the head with it, and getting your own head cracked in... and it's unbelievable. It's one of the most brutal things I've ever seen. When they first see it, people are invariably shocked for a moment, then they ask if *they* can have a go."

The blows themselves are nauseatingly convincing, but what about the fight itself? Won't it just degenerate into an exercise in mindless swiping? Drew thinks not: "We had so many guys here who were initially sceptical about

UPDATE

Another *Blind Date* pairing goes spectacularly wrong.

"Oh, I'm sorry, did I break your concentration?"

"Tonight, Matthew, I'm going to be Kurt Cobain."

There goes the sanctity of human life.

Apparently his last words were "ow", "arrgh", and "eek".

Damn. Got some oesophagus on my shoe.

Hey, whaddya think of my corpse collection?

Either he's licking up a pool of strawberry jam or he's been very seriously hurt.

"Sniff... I lost my puppy dog... sniff sniff... His name was Skip... snuffle...

melee. But we worked hard at it and we've got something cool. It plays well. You can't spoof the AI. These guys are *tough*. If you try to circle-strafe around 'em they'll track with you; if you back away they *jump* toward you and hit you. They are *nasty* with these pipes."

Once the body-impact algorithms and AI routines were in place, the team realised that the one-on-one

> ❝ **I happen to like the grimy, seedy, gritty side of things. Games like *Kingpin* offer a chance to indulge your fantasies** ❞
>
> **DREW MARKHAM, XATRIX ENTERTAINMENT**

scraps were proving to be just too much fun to skimp on.

Drew: "We hadn't figured on the lead pipe combat being so *cool*, so originally it wasn't going to figure much in the game. But now... well, let's just say that in the first episode you get to beat the crap out of a *lot* of people with the lead pipe."

Having programmed, tested, tweaked and re-tweaked all of *Kingpin's* close-up fighting non-stop for a number of months, Drew and the team are probably the world's foremost authorities on one-on-one blunt object combat. In which case, do they have any tips to pass on to would-be murderers?

"Yeah," says Drew, "aim for the head or the chest. If you hit 'em in the head it's really *really* nasty – you definitely want to go for that. But then in a pipe fight any limb'll do, as they say."

ALKIL YEWYA MODDAFOG

Unless you've got some downright bizarre eye condition that prevents you from looking at pictures, you've probably stared at these *Kingpin* screenshots and noticed: 1) that they're lovely; 2) that any one of these men could have you with one hand tied behind their back because you're such a blubbering wuss; and 3) that *Kingpin* is set very much in the real world. In fact, glance momentarily and you could be forgiven for thinking you'd seen stills from a grainy documentary about gang violence rather than a game. And that's no accident, says Drew.

"We've put in a lot of work and a lot of effort, and we've tried to create something that's different. Not just different for the sake of being different, but because... I'm 40 years old now, so I've been doing this for quite a while. And my taste has changed a lot as I've gotten older. Not just my taste in games, but my taste in movies has changed, and so on.

One of the things I'm reacting against is that a lot of games are fantasy-based. They're not very 'real world'. I think I know why: it's because the real world is extremely tough to portray in a game; it's much easier to set it all on Planet Y or in dungeon Z or whatever the hell you want to call it.

"But I happen to like the grimy, seedy, gritty side of things, and it's something we don't get to see much. Games to me are things that should provide opportunities to do stuff I can't do in real life. I suppose I *could* go out and be a criminal, but it's probably not a good idea. Be a thug for a day and you wind up in jail or the morgue. Games like this offer a chance to indulge your fantasies."

Especially the more violent ones. *Kingpin's* brutal nature is already just too much for some.

"We get a lot of critics claiming we're extolling the virtues of crime and violence and so on... and that's *garbage*," Drew spits. "If you can't distinguish between your fantasy life and reality, you've got problems that we're not going to solve by *not* making these programs. It's a *game*."

KIZM EYE FOGGIN PRIG YEFFOK

Of course, right now, there's only one standard by which all first-person shooters must be judged: how well (or how poorly) they stand against the freshly-crowned King of All Games, *Half-Life* (PCZ #71, 95%).

Drew is quick to acknowledge Valve's mighty accomplishment (eagerly praising, for example, *Half-Life's* 'real world' scenario), and when asked how *Kingpin* measures up he's canny enough to avoid either criticism *or* a direct comparison.

"We love *Half-Life*," he begins cautiously, "but I read the perfect description of it somewhere on the Internet the other day. Someone had called it the ultimate Pirates Of The Caribbean game."

Huh? Buh? *Wuh?*

"You haven't heard of that? Pirates Of The Caribbean is a ride at Disneyland. And it's fabulous. You go through and there's always something happening – a guy jumping out over here, someone else racing around over there. And as a linear, choreographed narrative goes, it's superb. The best thing I've ever seen."

Hmmm. Yesssss... but?

"But we're trying something different. We're not really scripting lots and lots of stuff. In *Half-Life*, you *know* that when you walk by a certain window you're gonna see a scientist get grabbed by a monster and yanked through an air-conditioning duct. We don't have a lot of that kind of stuff."

And in its place?

"In *Kingpin* it's more like you walk by and suddenly somebody shouts:

DREW MARKHAM

Meet the man from Xatrix, and Kingpin*'s scary lead programmer...*

PCZ Which was the first game you ever played?
DREW *Space War.* I think that's what it was called. Pre-*Pong.* It was in this wacky fibreglass case like a giant telephone. The strangest goddamned thing I'd ever seen in my life. I spent my lunch money on that thing, man.
PCZ Which other games have you been playing?
DREW *Rogue Squadron.* I really enjoyed the hell out of that. It's mindless but it's very cool. I played *Zelda* on the N64 up to a point, but then I had to get focused on *Kingpin* again.
PCZ Ever been in a fight?
DREW Oh my God... Not really. Not since the fifth grade. I've *nearly* gotten into loads of fights though.
PCZ Which game has influenced you the most?
DREW This'll sound odd, but it has to be *Wolfenstein.* Back then, when that came out, it just changed *everything.*

THE GANG'S ALL HERE
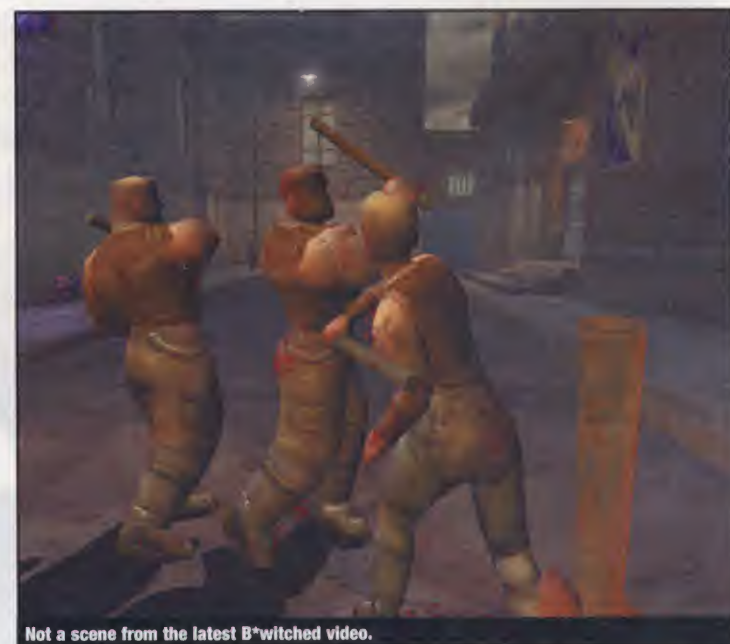
Not a scene from the latest B*witched video.

Being intelligent, the characters in *Kingpin* don't just wander around all on their lonesome. No. They form little clubs. Not Tupperware clubs, or paedophile rings, you understand, but good old-fashioned, inner city crimewave *gangs*. And as you progress through the game, you get to run one of your very own.

"You really need to utilise your own gang if you want to win," Drew cautions. "You can look on them as another weapon, although it kind of hurts more when you lose them. After a while they become like members of the family. Having said that, if you've got to storm a building with a ton of guys inside, you want these cats going in in *front* of you."

Hmm... Other characters helping you out? That sounds a bit... *Half-Life*-ish?

"*Half-Life* has the 'barneys' – the guards. They're useful sometimes, but they often don't follow you very far. As for *our* guys, these idiots will follow you *anywhere*. They're like the redshirts on *Star Trek* – you know, the security guys who are always beaming down with Kirk and getting killed. They're a lot of fun."

All a bit porky, aren't they? Check out that guy's arse.

Nice building. Now let's go crack some heads.

The Richard and Judy of the street-fighting world.

They've pulled out all the stops in the new series of *Changing Rooms*.

'Hey, f**k you', and you turn around and there's a gunfight going on. And you think, *Woah*, I didn't know that was going to happen. And *we* didn't know it was going to happen either."

And why? Because, darling snookums, the Xatrix team are trying to let the in-game characters provide the shocks themselves.

"I wanted to create an empiric behaviour model. That's a real fancy way of saying I didn't want things to be scripted to a great degree. We wanted something where the characters have individual behaviours based upon certain parameters we can endow them with. We're trying to get enough of those variables in there to make *spontaneous* behaviour occur. It's not an easy thing to do, I'll tell ya. But it's getting to the point where it really is *extremely* convincing and immersive. The characters will look for cover, they'll hide behind things...

"One of the things that startled me the most when all this behaviour stuff started working, was this: I was playing the Skid Row level, and there's this bit where there's a lady with a gun. I'd had many battles with her before and I usually killed her quite quickly. But that was before the AI changes.

"This time, I went out there and started shooting, and I got her a coupla times and she got *me* a coupla times... then she *ran off*. And I was like, what the hell? She's, like, *gone*. I thought there was a problem, so I walked around the corner. And there she was, crouched down, waiting for me. She unloaded an entire clip. Killed me. I thought, *woah*, you *devious* little, er, you know what."

Cow? Bitch? Jizzjar? We don't know. He didn't say.

GEDDAFOGOUDAHEAH

So, besides unspeakable violence, AI and camaraderie, what else does *Kingpin* have to offer?

Drew pauses. "Well, there's a *little* resource management, but not much. We didn't want to make *Virtual Accountant* here, you know. You have to manage money, but that's a pretty simple thing to do: whack somebody, strip 'em, and get the money off 'em. Collect it, just like ammunition."

Collecting money implies that you've got things to buy. And we already know you can converse with characters and form 'parties'... This is all starting to sound rather like an RPG, isn't it?

"Yeah. There are some pretty heavy adventure game overtones. There's also a strong narrative element, in that ultimately you're trying to whack the crime boss and, as you gain notoriety, people who previously ignored you suddenly want to blow your head off.

"You start the game unconscious

and dumped in an alley. You find the lead pipe, but there's no gun right off the bat. Your objective is to find one, or life's gonna be a lot harder. So you get employed by this guy who runs a pawn shop, and if you do something for him he'll give you a pistol.

"The number two weapon is typically a piece of crap," drawls Drew. "Usually you're thinking along the lines of: 'I can't *wait* to get rid of this piece of shit the moment I get something better.'

But you know what? I'm tired of that. I want people to still think of this pistol as a viable weapon, even at the end of the game. We created modifications for it which you can find or buy as you play. At the start of the game it's kinda wimpy, but by the end it's a pretty ass-kickin' gun."

Unusually for an action game, your aim improves as you play, not simply through sheer practice, but thanks to an RPG-style 'experience points' system which actually affects the accuracy of the gun.

"As for the way it all unfolds... Well, I've really tried to keep it so that a lot of the game happens in your head," Drew claims, mysteriously. "Someone smarter than me once said that videogames don't take place on the screen, they take place in your *mind*. I agree with that."

And waddafog duz dis foggin guy mean by *dat*, den, huh? Well, you'll have to wait for the full review to find out. Tell you what, mister reader – we'll rendezvous back here then, yes? Good. PCZ

A new dawn is almost upon us with...
COMMAND & CONQUER:
TIBERIAN SUN

Erik Yeo, lead designer on one of the most keenly awaited PC games ever, talks to *Jeremy Wells* about Voxels, Kane and proving the critics wrong

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Westwood
PUBLISHER Electronic Arts
WEBSITE www.ea.com
OUT April

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

✪ Westwood's record in producing brilliant real-time strategy games is second to none
✪ It's one of the most eagerly awaited PC games ever

It was supposedly going to be one of the biggest PC games of last Christmas, but once again it failed to materialise. "We just wanted to get everything right," explains Erik Yeo, the game's lead designer, almost apologetically. "We've been working on the game for almost two years now, and it's important that we get the balance just right. We'll be playtesting each level and tweaking things right up until they wrench it from our hands for duplication. In many ways it's the most difficult thing to get right with a game like C&C. You change just one variable and it could throw things out of balance considerably."

For those of you who have been in prison, or pot-holing in deepest, darkest Wales for the past two years, *Tiberian Sun* is the third instalment in the phenomenally successful *Command & Conquer* series of real-time strategy games. It's also the game with which the term 'keenly awaited' has now almost become synonymous. But it's here (almost), and things are looking good for *C&C* fans.

IF IT AIN'T BROKE...

So what's new? Well, from the outset it appears that Las Vegas-based developers Westwood adhere to the adage about not fixing things that aren't broken. In which case, presumably a few of them still watch movies on Betamax videos, drive to work in '66 Mustangs and wear the kind of clothes that would automatically qualify them as extras in the next Austin Powers movie. That aside, *Tiberian Sun* doesn't look a million miles away from *Red Alert* (*PCZ* #47, 94%), or even the original *Command & Conquer* (*PCZ* #28, 95%) game that

You can now right-click and scroll your way about the screen, and zoom in too.

No Tanya and no dogs, "but there are creatures who can help you out".

New, context-sensitive waypoints give you even greater control over your forces.

> **"One of the fundamental features new to *Tiberian Sun* is the capacity for a unit to gain experience and actually improve itself according to the number of successful encounters it is involved in"**

The game will run on a P133 with 32Mb of RAM and doesn't need any kind of 3D accelerator support. If things still slow up, you can tone down some of the effects.

The game uses Voxel technology to keep the detail and frame rate high. There's coloured lighting and smoke effects in software too.

first saw the light of day almost four years ago. That is, it doesn't look that different at first glance. However, closer observation indicates that while every other developer has been busy working on their own *C&C* clone, and more recently getting lost within the intricacies of 3D and frame rates, Westwood have been beavering away refining and improving their own original concept and design. And they've done so to great effect.

For starters, the easily manipulated isometric control interface of *Tiberian Sun* will be instantly familiar to fans of the previous games in the series. As will the storyline, which takes up the threads of the plot where *Red Alert* left off, albeit some 20 years later (see The Story So Far boxout on page 44). But that's not to assume that Westwood have taken the step of presuming that every PC gamer on the globe has played and enjoyed *C&C*. Fair enough, most of them have, but for the novices a tutorial is included that takes you through the basics.

NEW UNITS FOR OLD

Of course, there are plenty of new units and buildings to get to grips with, which will no doubt provide an even greater challenge for the armchair strategist who is now infinitely familiar with the personnel and weaponry available in the previous games. Most important of all, however, is that they're now in 3D.

Yeo explains how one of his particular favourites is the new Hunter-Seeker Droid, a 'clean-up' unit that automatically attaches itself to a random enemy unit, thereby enabling you to gather valuable intelligence regarding your opponent's strength and →

The terrain set is more detailed than before, and each has a snow/ice winter variation.

Ion storms affect hi-tech equipment and help level the battlefield.

The usual dynamic cut-scenes are in abundance, and are now a lot more action-oriented. Westwood even managed to rope in James Earl Jones (above) and Michael Biehn.

It's possible to play missions in a different order and still complete the same major objective.

position before self-destructing. Then there's the new super-sexy Jump-Jet Infantry, Orca bombers, the mighty Mammoth Tank, which makes a welcome return, now bigger and stronger than ever, as well as super-sneaky new burrowing and tunnelling weapons that have been designed to lay even the most heavily fortified base open to attack.

New buildings abound too. One of the more cleverly conceived, and of which Yeo is especially proud, is the Stealth Generator (also known as the David Copperfield Device™), which turns every allied unit and structure within its considerable range invisible. However, as with almost every hi-tech unit in the game, this seemingly indomitable edifice does have a weakness, and can be rendered quite useless if an opponent manages to get close enough to use a Deployable Sensor Array, or if you happen to fall prey to an Ion storm, in which case all your units become completely visible again and therefore ripe for a damn good kicking. Even in the hi-tech, futuristic world of *Tiberian Sun*, it seems there's still a place for the humble foot soldier.

EVOLUTION NOT REVOLUTION

For those fans hoping to put their shiny new Pentium and Voodoo2 cards to the test, *Tiberian Sun* will be something of a disappointment. Yeo is keen to point out that while the game does indeed boast new visual and technical elements that set it above its predecessors, it runs quite happily on a P133 with 32Mb of RAM. And thanks to new, speedy Voxel technology, you don't need a 3D accelerator card to run it. In fact, if you've got one it won't even help matters at all; although those in possession of a machine that supports the mystery that is MMX might witness a slight spurt in performance.

That's not to say that *Tiberian Sun* doesn't look just a bit special. Westwood have come up with a new terrain type that actually changes during the course of play. Explosions, digging and even the weather can and will affect the terrain. Rivers can now freeze over, for example, which opens up no end of tactical nuances to each mission. You can also expect to see new coloured and dynamic lighting effects, and see units rock and tumble thanks to a new physics engine. "Everything now has a designated weight, elasticity and flammability," Yeo reveals. "You might shoot at a unit and it explodes, and a piece will land in a clump of trees which then in turn bursts into flames." Similarly, gun turrets now turn, debris from a blown bridge causes damage, smoke billows, and the 3D units now look more detailed than ever. And this is all running in software, don't forget.

TACTICAL DEVELOPMENTS

It's not all just eye candy, however. Westwood have obviously thought long and hard about the implications of their new technology, and how best to implement it in terms of gameplay too. For example, Yeo points out there are now two subtly different types of light – soft and hard. 'Hard' light reveals everything, as is the norm, but the new 'soft' light that's used in certain areas is selective in what it picks up. It's an ingenious concept, and one that opens up a whole new world of stealth and guerrilla-based tactics that rely as much on the strength of enemy intelligence and use of terrain as they do firepower and speedy deployment.

One of the fundamental features new to *Tiberian Sun* that will no doubt get the juices flowing is the capacity for a unit to gain experience and actually improve itself according to the number of successful encounters it is involved in. The introduction of 'Veterancy', Yeo maintains, not only succeeds in creating a new emotional attachment to your units, but also means that, tactically at least, it may now be prudent to look at the bigger picture, and employ some kind of 'tour of duty' management scheme that doesn't leave you with raw recruits when only seasoned units are up to completing the mission successfully.

Candid and personalised speech is also being used to give characters added personality and strengthen the

THE STORY SO FAR

Bringing you up to date on what happened in the previous games in the series, and where *Tiberian Sun* picks up the story

More than 20 years have passed since the dramatic finale of Tiberian Dawn. The Global Defence Initiative (GDI) and the Brotherhood of NOD are still very much at war. Tiberium, the alien mineral that arrived on Earth via a meteor, is spreading at an ever increasing rate and has caused both sides to drastically reorganise their forces and objectives.

The GDI have been forced to evacuate the remaining world's population to arctic territories where the alien menace struggles to survive.

The Brotherhood of NOD, having suffered a hefty blow with the apparent loss of Kane, their dome-topped leader, have retreated underground. Without Kane, NOD have become fragmented and factionalised, and arguably therefore more unpredictable and lethal than ever.

As the game progresses, NOD begin to experiment with Tiberium in a search for ways to enhance the capabilities of their elite troops and personnel by genetic mutation. Meanwhile, the GDI struggle to maintain order .

Seemingly from nowhere, a new group enters the fray. The Forgotten are a rag-bag of mutants deformed by the effects of Tiberium, and are neglected by the GDI and abused by the Brotherhood.

As before, you can choose to join either of the two main forces. Opt to command the GDI and you assume the role of Commander McNeil. Your objective is two-fold: eliminate NOD attacks, and attempt to uncover the secret behind the rapid growth of Tiberium. Choose NOD and you assume the role of Slavik, leader of one of the NOD factions. Your aim is to reunite NOD, defeat the GDI forces and learn how to harness the newly discovered alien technology.

The emphasis is now a lot more on stealth and using the terrain rather than simply rushing in armed to the teeth. Big forces now attract a lot of attention.

The maps are going to be roughly twice as large as the largest maps in *Red Alert*.
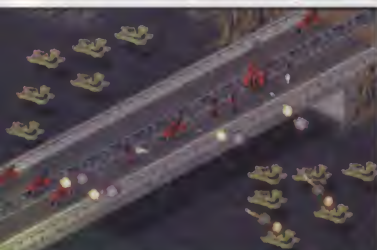
The two sides are now very different. "We worked hard to make the Nod and the GDI more distinctive than ever," says Yeo.

The AI is now a lot smarter, and prioritises actions a lot more. It's a lot less lemming-like than it was in previous games."

The game will run in a 1024x768 resolution, though most will opt for the 640x400 minimum for the sake of speed.

player-unit bond. "They'll also tell you when they're being attacked, and might suggest what they're going to do about it," adds Yeo. "It's all very *Saving Private Ryan*."

Like its predecessors, *Tiberian Sun* is essentially linear, in that it's necessary for the sake of plot and development of the *C&C* universe. However, Yeo is at pains to make it clear that you can play multiple missions in a region in a different order in an attempt to affect the overall outcome of the main objective within a given area. "There is no best way to complete the game," he insists. "In fact there are many different ways to approach each objective within the game, and in testing it was pretty surprising to see the different ways people were tackling the same task.

TEACHING PRIVATE RYAN

Troops now 'learn' from their battlefield experiences

Battlefield experience now enhances your troops' abilities, based on what they achieve in battle. "For example," explains Yeo, "a mini-gunner slaying another mini-gunner gives the slayer very little experience. However, a mini-gunner which finishes off, say, a tank gets lots of experience. Once a unit is a veteran, it gains an improvement in one or more ability (range of fire, strength, speed etc). One of the first thing infantry units 'learn' is to scatter automatically when they come across an enemy tank."

Obviously, there are set objectives that keep the storyline intact, but there's a lot for players to decide too. It's sort of pseudo non-linear."

DOUBLE THE INTELLIGENCE

How the missions are played out is not the only thing that is unpredictable in *Tiberian Sun*. There are now two separate types of artificial intelligence at work deep within the game. Yeo explains: "We've got one AI that directs the CPU to achieve certain objectives the best way it can in any given scenario, and then there's the other AI that kicks in when you attack the CPU's forces, that directs how it should defend itself and what it should repair first."

How the units behave and their AI is undoubtedly most important when playing in single-player mode, and it's something that Yeo admits has been one of the most taxing aspects of the game in which to make any great strides. "We've worked hard to improve this area of the game," he says. "Now the AI prioritises things a lot more, and we've built in a kind of threat assessment. If you start attacking the CPU's base, for instance, it will react accordingly."

It's a similar case when it comes to going on the offensive: "Previously the enemy units had a habit of attacking,

◯ Whatever it is, you'd do well not to get on the wrong end of it.

lemming-like, in a straight line. It's a lot more varied now, because the AI takes into account new factors, especially the lie of the terrain. It's actually pretty clued up now, and it still surprises us when the CPU comes up with new ways of attacking you."

> **"A new terrain type actually changes during the course of play. Explosions, digging and even the weather can and will affect the terrain. Rivers can now freeze over"**

The online community is obviously important to Westwood, and as a result they have also been busy making sure that *Tiberian Sun* is an even more enjoyable multiplayer experience than previous *C&C* games by adding cool new features and making it as simple as possible to indulge in a little *mano-y-mano C&C*. "It's gotta be easily accessible to ensure that as many people as possible use it," Yeo explains. "We've incorporated a random

map generator so players don't have to play the same scenarios again and again, and you can now form clans and ally sides together. There's also a preview mode that enables you to look at a map before you play it."

As before, up to four human players can compete over the Net, or up to eight over a LAN. You can now also play in a co-op mode against the CPU as well as playing against each other, the overall aim being to encourage an even stronger Internet-based community to compete with the likes of *Quake* and *MechWarrior*.

AND SO TO WAR

Since the original *Command & Conquer* made its appearance back in 1995, rival developers have been frantically producing *C&C* clones of their own in an attempt to better Westwood's jewel in the RTS crown. Consequently, *Tiberian Sun* faces more competition than ever before as rival developers experiment with sophisticated 3D engines, cameras and ingenious new twists on the RTS genre. The pressure on the development team to produce the goods and live up to the massive expectations of the global gaming community is obviously immense. Yeo, at least, remains unfazed, convinced that *Tiberian Sun* will be a worldwide success: "I think people will like it. We made a conscious decision to not become embroiled in a features war, and I think it's paid off.

A lot of that stuff only serves to complicate matters – you seem to lose sight of what wargames are actually about. We've concentrated on making what we think is a great real-time strategy game, and we hope people are gonna like it. We do." PCZ

Give a little bit of heart and...

SOULBRINGER

Any game that lets you talk to the dead has to be worth a gander, hasn't it? *Charlie Brooker* thinks so

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Gremlin Interactive
PUBLISHER Gremlin Interactive
WEBSITE www.gremlin.co.uk
OUT Spring 99

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

● It's an adventure game! In 3D! And it's huge! And scary!

● The designer was responsible for *Realms Of The Haunting*, which rocked

● You get to control armies and everything

Right. Let's poke convention in the eye with a stick, shall we? Do you want to read a plodding, pedestrian preview about *Soulbringer*... or would you prefer a zany 'comedy' quiz? Huh? The quiz! The quiz! Yaaaaay!

Here's the deal: we'll chuck you a load of multiple choice questions, you pick what you think are the correct answers, then zip to the end of the feature and tot up your score, which you can then paint on a plank and hurl at a German. Whatever. Let's go.

1 WHAT SORT OF GAME IS IT?

a) A farmyard wrestling simulator
b) An exercise in deranged psychotic nastiness in which you strap a postman to a chair and drive pencils
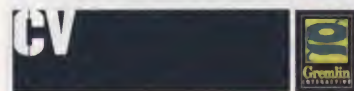
into his tear ducts
c) A classical-stylee role-playing adventure title with sumptuous graphics, in which all the action takes place from a third-person 3D perspective and comes complete with a user-positioned camera.

2 WHO'S THE STAR?

a) Keith Moon from The Who
b) Aunt Flo from *Bod*
c) *You are,* dimbo. You play a nameless young man on a quest to rid the world of a gang of demon lords known as the Revenants.

3 QUEST? REVENANTS? WOW, LIKE, I'M REALLY EXCITED NOW. CUHHH. WHY SHOULD I BOTHER READING ANY FURTHER?

a) Beats me
b) Because your heart is empty and only words can fill it
c) Because, although on paper the plot may sound a tad pedestrian, some of the *Soulbringer* team were also responsible for the completely tremendous and genuinely frightening *Realms Of The Haunting* (*PCZ #47, 93%*), a sadly overlooked classic which garnered a cult following (mainly among Mallo and Chris here in the *ZONE* office). This considered, you can bet your sweet bippy *Soulbringer* won't be a run-of-the-mill affair.

4 THIS ISN'T A PROPER QUIZ, IS IT?

a) You're right. Let's do away with this
b) And just get on
c) With the stuff about the game.

BACK TO BASICS

Phew. That's better. Right. Check out the screenshots. As you do so, mull a couple of things over in your mind. Try this: *Soulbringer* is a big game. It consists of five episodic stages which Gremlin reckon will take at least ten hours each to complete. That's fifty hours of gameplay in total, *minimum*.

⊙ **Put it away. You'll have someone's eye out with that.**

It's equally immense in scope. Your character ventures all around the world during his quest, from parched deserts to arctic wastes, from imposing cathedrals to the centre of Hell itself (the Arndale Centre in Wandsworth, presumably). The visuals, as you can see, are impressive.

"The graphics in *Soulbringer* are second to none," claims designer Paul Green. "We've got a great team of artists, and every one of them's completely on the ball."

In order to encompass all the pretty locations, the storyline unfolds on an epic scale. Starting out as a faceless slacker, you learn combat skills, gain magical powers, and eventually rise to become leader of a

thing, and then play again and there's something completely different happening."

We're also promised a "unique combat engine" which will make the game easy for newcomers to get into, yet complex and engrossing enough to reward long-term practice; it should be possible for experts to hack their opponents into bits with a solitary blow. Still, *Die By The Sword* (*PCZ #64, 75%*) promised the same thing, and that was a load of old rubbish, so we'll reserve judgement on all that until we get to *try* it, shall we?

DEAD DEAD GOOD

The title *Soulbringer* hints at a shadowy connection to the afterlife, and by crikey that's precisely what you'll find in the game. In the first episode, your character learns how to communicate with the dead. And not by shouting VERY LOUDLY in grave-yards either; no, he turns into a right old Doris Stokes. Chit-chatting with corpses plays an important role in the storyline – "more so than you'd think," say Gremlin, rather cryptically.

So: big locations, a third-person perspective, wacky combat, armies, corpses, lots of playing time, but a clichéd storyline. That's *Soulbringer* so far. The moment we get our claws

> **❝** *Soulbringer* consists of five episodic stages which Gremlin reckon will take at least ten hours each to complete: that's fifty hours of gameplay, *minimum* **❞**

massive army. It's just one of many career opportunities in the game.

"You can choose from 12 backgrounds for your character as you start, and you'll find certain scenarios and adventures are tailored to suit whichever one you've chosen," explains Paul. "Many of the non plot-related adventures are created randomly too. You might enter a forest one game and find one

on a reviewable version of the game, we'll be at it like a rat up a drainpipe. And then we'll write about it for you. Deal? Deal. Oh, and your score for the quiz? You scored zero. Because you are one. Now go on, sling your hook. PCZ

You could tear a can open with those ears.

Another screenshot, another fart gag opportunity.

The world's most boring swordfight.

If green means water, the house has had it.
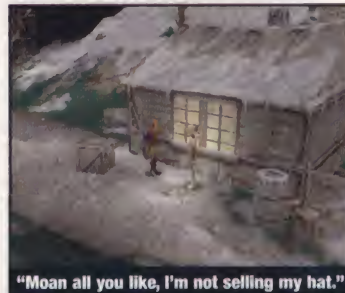
"Moan all you like, I'm not selling my hat."

Stone, velvet, old bookcases, men in hoods... it's an RPG alright.

The most miserable camping holiday in the world... ever!
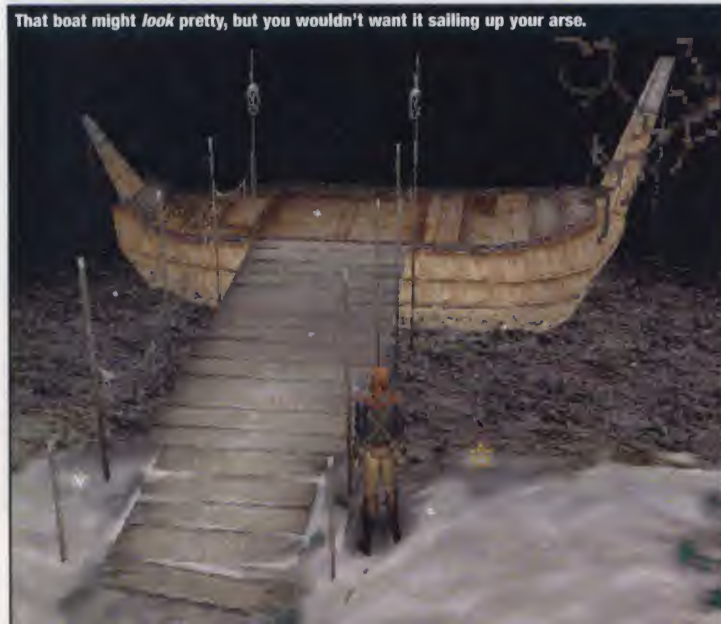
That boat might *look* pretty, but you wouldn't want it sailing up your arse.

Weren't you in an episode of *Scooby Doo*?

Look, it's him out of Kiss.

STUFF AND NONSENSE

You spin me right round baby, right round... like a record baby

You know how sometimes when it's got nothing better to do your mind starts fiddling around with words and songs and things? Since we're always looking at computer games, our minds often try to fit the names of them to the lyrics of well-known songs, which we then hum to ourselves or sing aloud. Example: *Super Bomberman* on the Super Nintendo meets *Mister Loverman* by Shabba Ranks. Result: chorus of "*Super Bomber-man... Shabba!*"

Another example: *Half-Life*. Tucks seamlessly into the chorus of *Park Life*, dunnit? Of course it does.

Final example: *Soulbringer*. The game we're looking at now. For some totally inexplicable reason, our brains keep associating it with *Stool Pigeon* by Kid Creole and the Coconuts. Every time we read the word *Soulbringer*, we keep wanting to follow it up with a "cha cha cha chaaaaa". If you're not familiar with *Stool Pigeon*, don't worry. That was all a meaningless aside anyway. Try paying attention to the heading next time.

Always believe in your soul...

SILVER

Apparently, all that glitters is not gold. *Steve Hill* turns thought into words

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Infogrames
PUBLISHER Infogrames
WEBSITE www.infogrames.co.uk
OUT March

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- Straddles several genres
- 78 different characters
- 320 detailed scenes
- Runs on an unaccelerated P166

Mention dragons and orcs to anyone with acceptable standards of personal hygiene and they'll run a mile. Not literally (that would involve exercise), but it's safe to say that gamers weaned on fast cars, football and fighting have little truck with the sinister world of the RPG, an acronym that immediately suggests bearded men rolling dice and drinking flagons of cider. RPGs have certainly had a bad press over the years, the genre proving to be the gaming equivalent of trainspotting.

However, attitudes could be set to change as *Silver* attempts to shatter preconceptions. In fact, so much so that it could be said not to be an RPG at all. Indeed, it doesn't slot comfortably into any particular pigeonhole, as the game's producer, Lee Clare, explains: "A lot of people have drawn comparisons with *Final Fantasy VII* (*PCZ* #66, 93%), which is nice, but we started way before we'd even seen *Final Fantasy VII*. It's nothing like it at all; this is real-time

combat. I don't think there's a genre you can bang it in. I'd say it's an arcade adventure beat 'em up. I mean, that's bizarre. You've got role-playing elements in that you have stats-based combat, but it's like *Command & Conquer* in that you have combat strategy management. You don't actually see that until you've got through 60 per cent of the game, so most people make the assumption that it's an adventure game. I don't know how to pigeonhole it, it's been really hard."

SILVER LADY
It may not be the easiest game to describe, but the story behind *Silver* is crucial, and goes a little bit like

this... The titular Silver is a pretty nasty piece of work. In fact he's an absolute shitehawk. For a bit of a laugh, he decides to kidnap every woman in the land of Jarrah, mumbling something about needing a new wife. You play the role of the more soberly named David, and when your good lady wife Jennifer is dragged kicking and screaming

> **❝ The titular Silver is a pretty nasty piece of work. For a bit of a laugh, he decides to kidnap every woman in the land, mumbling something about needing a new wife ❞**

from the conjugal bed, you are understandably perturbed. Naturally you instantly set about avenging this misdemeanour and try to restore a semblance of some sort of order to the proceedings.

Set in a mythical time of swords and sorcery, it's essentially a classic battle between good and evil, with a

That's you, that is.

Kill the dragon and that.

That's Silver. He's a wrong 'un.

Nice rug, but where's the telly?

nod towards Romeo and Juliet or, for the drama students, Orpheus and Eurydice. Requiring heroic action in the face of overwhelming opposition, it's also a bit of a David versus Goliath encounter, or, more specifically, David versus Silver. In common with numerous games over the years, it's quite literally a case of kill the bad guys and get the girl. As Lee says: "David's your all-American, white-toothed, blond-haired hero."

Of course, any budding hero needs to be a dab hand with a sword. Practice comes in the form of a training session, enabling you to get to grips with the innovative combat system. This involves sweeping the mouse about violently, your actions replicated on-screen by the swiping and lunging of your sword. It looks like a strong right arm will be required, although this shouldn't trouble the majority of dedicated RPG fans.

As well as the perennial trusty blade, ranged weapons also come into play, including throwing knives, catapults and the good old bow and arrow. It's not all fighting though, as an array of magic can be thrown into the mix, including such handy tricks as an invisibility spell and a Lycanthrope amulet, which turns you into a hairy-backed werewolf.

Other characters can come to your aid, and up to three can be controlled simultaneously. For instance, you can tell one character to attack while the other two make good their escape. Success in the game is dependent on mastering a number of skills, and as such there are no difficulty levels. As Lee explains: "If you're crap, you don't gain experience. It's based on training. If you're no good at it, then hard shite."

SILVER DREAM MACHINE
Silver features a vast array of characters, the majority of whom have speaking parts. A huge amount of dialogue has been recorded, and the developers have drawn upon a disparate array of voice talent. For instance, erstwhile long-scarved Doctor Who Tom Baker provides the narration. Displaying more ham than Sainsbury's, Baker rolls out lines such as "A terrifying evil was unleashed", his unique brand of high-eyebrowed spookiness proving well-suited to the tone of the game. However, his involvement in the project was more down to chance than planning, as Lee reveals: "I met him in the boozer up the road. He was busy doing *Casualty* at the time."

The game is being developed in Manchester, and other artists

In retrospect, the fart-lighting contest was a mistake.

----

mooted included *Coronation Street*'s Les Battersby and Curly Watts, the latter pencilled in to voice the part of a landlord. Such casting failed to materialise though, which in light of actor Kevin Kennedy's well-publicised alcohol problem is probably for the best. Metal-toothed junglist Goldie was also passed over, although the music industry is tenuously represented by hirsute rockers Supergrass, of all people.

Coming on two CDs, what is certain is that *Silver* will be absolutely huge, offering at least a good 50 hours of play. As Lee concurs: "It's a f**king big game." Whether it's also a f**king good game will become apparent next month, when we get our hands on a copy and do a review and that. **PCZ**

Silver has been described as "Disney meets Animé". Which is fair enough.

Gauntlet, anyone?

Call the cops, here comes...

DRIVER

Car chases, bank jobs, cops and robbers. It's another day in Newcastle for *Steve Hill*

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Reflections
PUBLISHER GT Interactive
WEBSITE www.gtgames.com
OUT March

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- Breaking the law
- Ludicrous car chases
- Authentic cities
- No guns

UPDATE

CV

REFLECTIONS

A brief history from humble beginnings to corporate takeover

1984	Started by Martin Edmonson and a school friend (who left after a couple of years).
1984-88	Wrote several games for the BBC Micro published by Acorn Soft/Superior Software.
1988-97	Several titles published by Psygnosis (a *Shadow Of The Beast* trilogy, two *Destruction Derby* games, *Awesome* and *Ballistics*).
1998-99	Three games in development (PC and PlayStation).

Drive like that on a public highway and you'd deserve to be called a raving maniac.

Welcome to Miami.
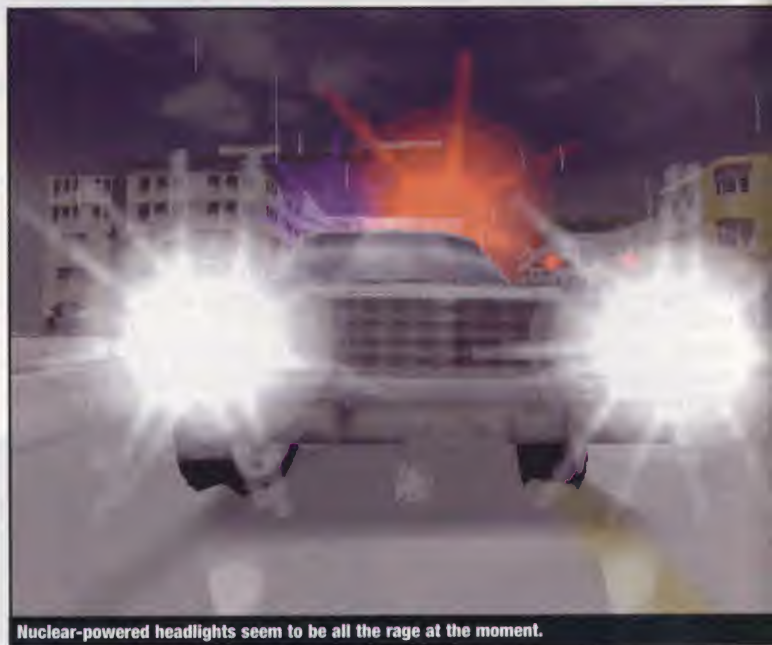
Nuclear-powered headlights seem to be all the rage at the moment.

We first covered *Driver* in issue 64, back in the days when a copy of *PC ZONE* would leave you with very little change from a fiver: one new pence, to be precise. Consequently, those of you with short arms and deep pockets may have missed it. So for the new boys, here's a recap. *Driver* is not a racing game – not in the traditional sense, anyway – it's a car chase game in which you play the part of a getaway driver, undertaking numerous (generally illegal) jobs. There is no set race track, no set laps and no crash barriers. Rather, the action is city-based, offering full freedom of movement. Avenues, pavements, parks, and narrow alleys stacked with garbage are all fair game, as are handbrake turns, screeching tyres and elaborate wheel spins. Basically, *Driver* is every American car chase cliché you've ever seen. And it looks great.

The game is being developed in Gateshead by Reflections, the team behind the *Destruction Derby* series. Having severed connections with Psygnosis, *Driver* was without a publisher the last time we saw it, a situation that has now been rectified. In fact, GT Interactive liked it so much they bought the company (paperwork

> **"Basically, *Driver* is every American car chase cliché you've ever seen. And it looks great"**

pending). Martin Edmonson is the founder of Reflections, and under the new deal he remains a partner. He also came up with the concept for *Driver* and cites some obvious influences – *Bullitt*, *The Blues Brothers*, *Starsky And Hutch*, *The Dukes Of Hazard*, *The Italian Job*, *Smoky And The Bandit*, *The Cannonball Run*.

With more than a keen interest in the destruction of cars, it's tempting to wonder whether this has manifested itself in real life. "No. I've got a clean licence at the minute, actually, a completely clean licence."

In fact, a licence that enables him to drive his Mercedes from his newly expanded offices to his quayside penthouse apartment – a lifestyle somewhat at odds with that of the stereotyped games enthusiast.

THE STREETS OF SAN FRANCISCO

Perhaps wisely, the local area was overlooked when deciding on a setting for the game, and *Driver* actually takes place in Miami, New York, San Francisco and Los Angeles, which, despite being in America, are actually all very different, as Martin explains: "That's precisely why they were chosen. Miami is pastel shades, palm trees, water, blue skies, that kind of thing. New York's very oppressive, with huge city block buildings. San Francisco has to be in there because of

Bullitt and because it obviously gives you a lot of opportunities for the landscape. Los Angeles has elements of beach and elements of city in it – the Downtown area, Hollywood, Rodeo Drive. Partly what we're trying to do is create recognisable areas in cities, where you actually know your way around. The buildings themselves are taken from real-life buildings. The major ones are positioned correctly and each area of the city is geographically accurate as well."

The cities are also extremely large, each spanning between 20 and 30 miles and featuring around 150,000 buildings. They also adhere to their own accurate traffic systems, and if you really want to, you can simply go for a leisurely drive – Sim Traffic, if you will. However, the more adventurous gamer will eventually opt for the story-led missions, which include such tasks as picking up bank robbers, tailing a suspected grass or simply ramming someone off the road. More ingenious missions involve delivering a stolen police car intact, frightening a stubborn debtor by taking him for a ride in a taxi, or teaching a restaurateur a lesson by driving through his front window.

CAR TROUBLE

There are 44 missions in total, mostly involving ill behaviour, not to mention extreme felony. This isn't a situation the pious Japanese market was happy with though, and consequently the storyline has had to be changed to incorporate the lead character as an undercover cop. Further legal issues involve the cars themselves, which were originally intended to be faithful replications of actual models. There are 14 cars in total, but as Martin explains, "They're not officially licensed because the car manufacturers won't accept any illegal use of the cars, or damage to the cars, or destruction of property. And that kind of sums up the whole game. It's a shame, I suppose, but what do you do? Have the cars not allowed to smash into anything, remove all criminal activity from the game altogether, and not allow the cars to be damaged? It would ruin the game. So what we've tried to do is to take the look of some of these classic American muscle cars – big American black car chase-type cars; fairly faceless, really, but everybody's seen them in Starsky And Hutch and The Dukes Of Hazard. Just a very cheap throwaway car to smash into things."

For extended tomfoolery, Driver also features a comprehensive replay editor, enabling you to utilise a variety of camera positions and types, effectively directing your very own car chase. As Martin says: "The game is really designed to be a simulation of Hollywood car chases, so it seems natural that you should play the part of the director."

It's a very cool idea indeed, and just one of many in a game that is already shaping up to be to be among the most innovative of the year. If Driver turns out to be the sum of its considerable parts, then GT should be very happy with their investment. Ker-ching! PCZ

San Francisco's Golden Gate Bridge, of all places.

Despite the numerous crashes, nobody actually gets killed in Driver.

Innocent civilians occasionally get in the way. The tits.

Night-time missions add a further element to the mayhem.

Q&A

MARTIN EDMONSON

The managing director of Reflections, comes under the PC ZONE spotlight. Ve vill ask you only once...

PCZ What's the first game you ever played?
MARTIN Defender, in the arcades.
PCZ What's the best game you've ever played?
MARTIN Defender. I think it's a nostalgia thing.
PCZ What's the last game you paid money for?
MARTIN Elite on the BBC Micro.
PCZ Have you ever been in a fight?
MARTIN No, but I've been punched a few times.

A cricket game, yesterday. Zzzzzzzz...

Cricket World Cup 99 will get you in the mood for the real thing.

Lords: England will be there for the final – they've reserved seats in the front row.

The 'eye in the sky' camera gives the best view when England are hit for six.

These two forgot to change out of their pyjamas.

CRICKET WORLD CUP 99

How will England fare in the cricket World Cup this year? *Craig Vaughan* **plays out his own scenario**

FIRST ENCOUNTER

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Creative Assembly
PUBLISHER EA Sports
WEBSITE www.ea.com
OUT May

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- It's the official game of the cricket World Cup
- EA are past masters at this sort of thing
- It will appeal to arcade and strategy fans
- Comprehensive management and strategy options

Your average British citizen neither knows nor cares when the next cricket World Cup is being held. And given England's recent suicidal surrender of the Ashes, the public's apathy is understandable. Unfortunately, further international humiliation is looming large, because England have qualified for World Cup 99 by virtue of past glory and volunteering to host the event. The slipstream of publicity created by the competition will no doubt ensure that the resulting flood of PC cricket games gives fans some sort of consolation following England's inevitable first round exit – no doubt at the hands of cricket giants Namibia or the Pot-Pot Islands.

Impending doom aside, Electronic Arts are the first company to pitch for your cash with the officially licensed *Cricket World Cup 99*, and with their reputation for presentation and playability it may well be that they'll knock the competition for six.

We're promised a full-on team management simulation that will appeal to action fans and strategists alike. Thankfully, hit-and-hope players (ie those modelling themselves on the current England team) can forget about the technicalities of batting orders and field placements, and take advantage of the basic 'pick up and play' game mode. This offers simplified one-button batting and bowling options, and leaves the strategy management to those of a more cerebral disposition. Alec Stuart wannabes, however, will embrace the game's Captain mode, which gives complete control over all aspects of team

> **"England players have been motion-captured, so we can expect some golden ducks, dropped catches, run-outs and leg-before dismissals"**

selection and tournament strategy.

EA, concerned that their PC version of the tournament should be able to accurately reflect the unfolding drama of the real event, will be constantly updating their website with up-to-the-minute player and team statistics, and weather news – the bad weather being as inevitable as England's early demise. As it's an EA Sports title, coded by the same guys who brought us the *FIFA* series, we can anticipate an option-laden front end with every aspect of the simulation being user-adjustable. Play will be viewed through a beautifully fast and fluid 3D engine equipped with multiple camera angles (including the now obligatory television-style stump and out-field views). To add to the realism several key England players have been motion-captured performing over 600 fielding, batting and bowling manoeuvres, so we can expect to see some stunningly portrayed golden ducks, dropped catches, run outs and leg-before dismissals – situations the England team are well versed in. The carnival atmosphere will be enhanced by the inclusion of all the World Cup grounds, and verbose in-game commentary and analysis from a host of cricket legends.

Cricket has had a far from illustrious history on the PC, so EA undoubtedly have their work cut out attempting to overcome the gaming public's indifference towards cricket in general and the England team in particular. It could be, however, that EA are about to bowl us over with something special – which may be the only thing that fans have left to cheer come the final on June 20.

FLANKER 2.0

Rhyming slang is a wonderful thing. *Paul Presley* thinks so, anyway

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Eagle Dynamics
PUBLISHER The Learning Company
WEBSITE www.mindscape.com
OUT April

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- Russian military satellite terrain data
- Complex damage and collision detection engines
- Realistic weather effects
- Full mission editor

One day I'm going to call their bluff. Every time a flight sim designer demonstrates their 'highly accurate' terrain data, we're told how it's absolutely spot on – every hill, every dale, every road, river and rail is in exactly the same position as the real-world equivalent. One day I'm going to travel to one of these places, make a map and come back and compare. Then we'll see, oh yes.

Flanker 2.0 uses actual classified Russian military satellite imagery (they wouldn't tell me where they got it, but one suspects ex-KGB staff looking to make a quick capitalist

Russians build their hardware to do a job, not to grace the pages of *Cosmo*. So say a dogfight ensues, and perhaps the ugliest HUD of all time appears. Big, thick yellow circles fill the screen, clashing garishly with the blue steel cockpit interior. But the target explodes and it all seems very smooth. Shoot first, pose later.

Speaking of cockpits, the whole thing will be in full 3D all the time – no need to switch views, as with other games. All the dials and buttons continue to work as you move your head (they seem to have taken a leaf out of the FPS book here, as you control your head movement with the mouse) or lock on to a target.

There's a lot still to go into *Flanker 2.0* at the moment. Weather effects will apparently be so detailed that clouds will actually have water densities that affect infra-red missiles as they fly through them; a mission editor enables you to create complex and detailed scenarios that can be distributed at will; collision detection is mapped right down to the surfaces of the planes, rather than the

standard method of surrounding each unit with a solid box, meaning bullets and missiles can fly right between the tail struts without hitting anything. The list goes on and on. And it all sounds rather impressive. The only fly in the ointment is the lack of a dynamic campaign engine, so how it fares against *F-22: Total Air War* (*PCZ* #68, 95%) or *Falcon 4.0* (*PCZ* #72, 95%) we'll have to wait and see. PCZ
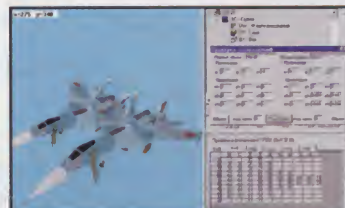
The collision detection engine maps to the plane's surface rather than surrounding it with a 'general area' box.

The ground textures have artificially added 'noise' to enhance the sense of speed.

> ❝Collision detection is mapped right down to the surfaces of the planes, meaning bullets can fly right between the tail struts without hitting anything❞

buck) to map an area of land near Azerbaijan that is so detailed the designers can depict every building in the area on screen. And to be fair to them, it seems to work. The amount of detail on screen is remarkable, putting several civil aviation sims to shame. These actually feel like real cities as you soar over them. And when you compare them side by side to the satellite images, you can see just how close it all looks.

The other thing that hits you is how fast it seems to move. This is actually a trick of the eye. The frame rate isn't significantly higher than that of any other large-scale military sim out there. Instead the graphics boys have added layers of 'noise' to the ground textures to add to the impression of speed. This too seems to work, although what it'll look like once the skies are filled with planes is anybody's guess.

Flanker 2.0's main hook is, naturally, that we're sitting in the planes that are usually found on the enemy lists in other sims. The initial reaction is that it all looks a bit ugly, but as the designers explain, the

Flanker makes use of some of the world's most advanced hardware.

The terrain mapping uses actual classified military satellite imagery for increased accuracy.

The naval variant of the Flanker, the SU33, will also be supported.

MORTYR: KILLING TIME

It's time to rewrite history, with *Paul Mallinson*

FIRST ENCOUNTER

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Mirage Media
PUBLISHER Interactive Magic
WEBSITE www.mortyr.com
OUT Friday 19 March

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- Authentic WWII setting
- Swanky 3D graphics using in-house engine
- Team-based co-operative deathmatch, with 'bots' or human players
- Twenty levels of goose-stepping fun

World War II ended back in 1945 with a decisive German victory... No, of course it didn't. But Polish developers Mirage Media would like us to think it did, if their new historically inspired 3D action game is anything to go by.

Despite the tenuous plot, and the fact that *Mortyr: Killing Time* essentially trivialises a harrowing period of modern history, the game itself looks like being lots of fun. Essentially *Mortyr* owes a hell of a lot to *Quake* (*PCZ* #43, 96%) and chums, being a first-person shooter, although we've yet to ascertain whether it's going to be straightforward blasting and not much else, or something more substantial like *Half Life* (*PCZ* #71 95%).

Twenty single-player levels are currently on the cards, ranging from missions that take place on moving trains (which we've seen and fully approve of), to exploratory sorties that span huge, sprawling castles adorned with sinister pseudo-Nazi imagery. Clearly this is one game that is unlikely to see the light of day in Germany (unless they change red blood to green and turn all the soldiers into fluffy bunny rabbits, that is). There'll be at least 12 realistic weapons based on WWII counterparts, and a smattering of futuristic devices such as jet packs and night vision goggles too. And, of course, there'll be a rocket launcher

No, you don't get to drive this, but you do get to blow it up. Before it blows you up, that is.

"Don't shoot! I'm only a painting!"

Look! Tracers and everything!

> ## "Clearly this is one game that is unlikely to see the light of day in Germany"

You see, the Allies failed in their attempts to thwart the plans of Adolf Hitler and his motley band of anti-Semitic cohorts, and now the whole world is suffering at the hands of their megalomaniacal plotting.

In this instance the date is 2060. You are a futuristic soldier called Jurgen Mortyr, a man disillusioned by the current Nazi regime, and investigating the disturbing decay of Earth's environmental stability. Jurgen's investigations uncover the presence of a prototype time machine, capable of sending Nazi agents forwards and backwards in time. He also concludes that this insidious dabbling with the laws of time is the prime cause of the devastating weather conditions, and vows to do something about it.

This something, however, involves sending his son, Sebastian Mortyr, back to World War II to rewrite history and "kick some Nazi butt" (as the supplied game overview so eloquently puts it), while Jurgen stays at home by a roaring log fire with nothing but his pipe and slippers and a bottle of schnapps for company.

tucked in there as well.

Graphically, Mirage Media are hoping to pull out all the stops with a vast array of effects such as: stained glass windows that affect the hue of the lighting and disintegrate realistically when shot; mist, fog and heavy rain; reflective surfaces; progressive texturing. Although the game will run in software on the minimum spec (P200 with 32Mb RAM), a 3D accelerator card is obviously required in order to see these in full effect. Oh, and there'll also be 3D sound courtesy of Intel's RSX Sound (whatever that is).

Currently pre-Beta, *Mortyr: Killing Time* is slated for a mid-March release. As things are added, and a more rounded picture of the game's strengths and weaknesses is formed, we'll let you know if it's worth buying or not. Watch out for our definitive review. PCZ

Whether or not you can shoot Zeppelins out of the sky remains to be seen.

Didn't you used to get these things free by collecting tokens from Action Man boxes?

See what we mean about the Nazi imagery?

"Achtung! Shoot him in ze face!"

Tch! Never return to a lit firework, Billy.

Separated at birth: Ekna and Billy Corgan.

If you like bats, you'll love *Guardian Of Darkness*.

"Brrr," stammered Billy, warming his cheeks by the candle."

Well if that isn't a ghost, I'm a monkey's uncle.

Sod this, it's too weird. I'm off.

GUARDIAN OF DARKNESS

Magic, ghosts, and a man with a bald head. Sounds like this game will appeal to the mysterious *Charlie Brooker*

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Cryo Interactive
PUBLISHER Cryo Interactive
WEBSITE www.cryo-interactive.com
OUT March

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

○ Stars Billy Corgan out of Smashing Pumpkins *(Not really – Ed)*
○ A spooky cross between *Tomb Raider* and *Alone In The Dark*
○ Varied locations, complex missions
○ Did we mention Billy Corgan?

FIRST ENCOUNTER

"In other words, it isn't just *Tomb Raider*, it's *Tomb Raider* meets *Alone In The Dark* meets *Scooby Doo*. In full-on accelerated 3D-O-Vision"

Well chew my hoop. Check this out: a game starring Billy Corgan out of rock band Smashing Pumpkins. Better still, it's a game in which Billy Corgan out of Smashing Pumpkins has to go and explore a bunch of haunted houses; he has to thwart hordes of ghosts and demons and spooks and spirits using a range of magic spells. Great!

Here's the plot: Billy Corgan has left Smashing Pumpkins following a row over a plectrum. Upset and sorely disillusioned, he decides to shun showbiz entirely by quitting whining in time to music, and training to be an exorcist monk instead. He joins a monk correspondence school that advertises in the back of *Thirsty Fireman Monthly* and, following years of intense training, discovers how to harness mental energy and command the hidden power of prayer. He's a magic monk! Hey presto!

His powers are impressive. He can levitate. He can shoot balls of energy from his fingertips. He can cook rice just so. Abracadabra!

As his fame spreads, he is invited to join The Gate, a sinister sect whose members act as guardians of the shadowy margin between life and death. The Gate send him on a series of missions, and it is these missions which comprise the game.

You can see what sort of game this is. If we stuck just one screenshot to the underside of a Formula One racing car and made you lie beneath the road peering upward through a manhole cover while the vehicle zoomed overhead at 200mph, the nano-glimpse you'd get would be enough to tell you that it's a bit like *Tomb Raider*.

And you'd be right. What you wouldn't see, however, is the positionable camera or the RPG elements – the in-game conversations, the inventory, or the sprawling map – all of which lift *Guardian Of Darkness* out of the dustbin of apathy and into the tray marked 'Ooh, That Looks Like It Might Be Quite Good'. Billy Corgan is just a bonus.

We mentioned the missions. What we didn't say is how varied they are. There are ten in all, veering from traditional gothic nonsense in old-fashioned spooky mansions, to kooky *Ghostbusters* hilarity in haunted burger bars and the like. Emerging victorious is a matter of jiggling about with objects and puzzles while simultaneously knocking the shit out of spooks with your high-falutin' magic spells. In other words, it isn't just *Tomb Raider* – it's *Tomb Raider* meets *Alone In The Dark* meets *Scooby Doo*. In full-on accelerated 3D-O-Vision. And starring Billy Corgan out of Smashing Pumpkins.

Oh, alright, it isn't Billy Corgan at all. It's a bloke called Ekna. We'll be reviewing the game in full just as soon as French developers Cryo have done typing it all in. Till then you'll have to content yourselves with just looking at the pictures. PCZ

OBSESSED WITH

ULTIMA ONLINE

Adrian brings his online alter-ego to life... well sort of.

Where would you like to move to in the world? USA? Australia? The Bahamas? Sod that lot – Adrian Selby emigrated to Britannia over a year ago and ain't in a hurry to come back

⭐ **WORDS** Adam Phillips

CASE HISTORY

⊙ PHOTOS Simon Clay

#10 BT'S FAVOURITE CUSTOMER

NAME Swiss Tony The Tailor

AKA Adrian Selby

AGE 28

LOCATION Barry, Wales

OCCUPATION Teaches a Youth Training Scheme as well as philosophy part-time

OBSESSION Indulging in the classic multiplayer role-playing epic that is *Ultima Online*

CONDITION BEGAN January 1998

HISTORY OF CONDITION Hooked after his very first go, Adrian now spends 20 hours a week and £120 a month embroiled in Origin's fantasy world

OUTLOOK With *Ultima Online*'s ever expanding universe and a new server (Europa) for us Brits to get away from those annoying Yanks, there's no reason for Adrian to pack his bags and come back

MUDs are crud. It's a well known fact – out in the game playing world though, there are some punters who are so die-hard for the genre that they'd rather indulge in the suffocating, dry and archaic worlds that make up 99.9 per cent of Multi User Dungeons than play hide the sausage with Gillian Anderson. They get a kick from reading turgid text descriptions, using parsers that a two-year-old child's vocabulary could put to shame, and spending hours whittering on about how good the old days were when *Hobbit* on the Spectrum was king. Certainly a classic in its time, but such nostalgic pinings for past glories have nearly killed the adventure and, some would argue, the role-playing genre stone dead.

While the likes of *Grim Fandango* (*PCZ* #71, 90%) and *Starship Titanic* (*PCZ* #63, 91%) have dragged the corpse-like adventure genre out of its coffin, *Ultima Online* has played an equally important role in bringing adventure and role-playing back to the masses. Indeed, *PC ZONE* can hear the letters of outrage pouring in already – you see, Origin's classic is (technically at least) a MUD in the eyes of purists. Despite some fairly horrific 'teething problems', its mix of

gaming and graphical finesse have managed to move the whole genre forward – unlike its text-based counterparts – capturing the imagination of players who don't want to spend hours reading exotic location descriptions that have clearly been written by someone who has never ventured outside their bedroom.

One such convert to the *Ultima Online* cause is Adrian Selby, who's been so enraptured by the game that, if we weren't so scared of ➡

Ahh, a wedding in *Ultima Online*. Unfortunately the bride was massacred moments later.

A PC, a modem and *Ultima Online*. "Sorted," says Adrian.

ULTIMA ONLINE... ONLINE

Save yourself time and money by doing a bit of research before ploughing head and wallet first into Britannia

Use Stratics' extensive database to locate maps and castle plans (costs a paltry 1,022,800 gold pieces).

The place to come, if you're stuck, or just dumb. A useful site indeed.

DEVBOARD
http://cob.crossroadsrpg.com/mbindex.htm

Sometimes you need a specific answer – simply post your query to one of the many messageboards here and you'll invariably have a set of answers within a couple of days. And don't worry if you think you're asking them a dumb question – they're a forgiving bunch.

Beat the bugs with this handy website. Newcomers, come here first!

STRATICS
http://uoss.stratics.com/index.html

In a word, stunning. Articles, essays, guides, maps and more form an invaluable database to getting ahead in *Ultima Online*. Want to know how to become a serial killer or a mere gourmet chef? Stratics has all the answers.

BUG ALERT
http://members.home.net:80/drtwister/

An essential stop-over for checking out what bugs are plaguing the *Ultima Online* world. There's also a series of patches that can be downloaded and a handy tips section – be sure to cast an eye over the info on cow tipping.

being sued, we'd wonder if he's displaying classic symptoms of obsessive compulsive disorder – the boy's mad about the game. An ardent role-player for the last 12 years, Adrian's life changed forever at the beginning of '98 when he shelled out for the seemingly innocuous game.

JUST ONE LOOK...

Logging on for the first time was all it took: "I was stunned – I really couldn't believe it," enthuses Adrian. "I was hooked straightaway, absolutely. The whole premise promised just what I wanted – instant role-playing with thousands of other people that couldn't be matched by conventional desktop RPGs."

So fond of his life online, Adrian even remembers where he touched down for the first time: "Near the tailors in the east side of the city of Britain", for those who want to know. And for those of you who are unfamiliar with *Ultima Online*, the game enables you to travel the vast world of Britannia in isometric 3D, meeting with people, tackling quests and choosing professions. And

> ❝You can slay dragons, tailor clothes, shepherd animals, learn poisoning, baking – it's up to you❞
> **'SWISS TONY THE TAILOR'**

Adrian's most successful online career to date? A baby-eating warlord? An assassin poisoning the rich and infamous? Well, no, a tailor called Tony actually. Like some of the bizarre people who inhabit the *Ultima Online* world, our Adrian is the kind of person boasting a successful 9 to 5 job who when wanting to escape into a fantasy world... er... gets a successful 9 to 5 job. And his own shop. So he can measure the inside legs of muscle-bound warriors.

His character's story reads like a clichéd Hollywood movie – a scrawny young man arrives in a strange land and is beaten up by the other players. He heads off to the mountains and starts cutting trees to build up his strength. Like the Charlie Atlas muscle ads, he returns a new man, makes new friends and wins ➡

NEWBIE GUIDE TO UO

Starting off in Britannia is a daunting prospect for even the most hardened player. You've got a pitiful amount of money, and garbage skills. Other players are swanning round in fancy armour, while all you've got is a Toys R Us-style sword. *PC ZONE* pleaded with Adrian for some advice...

✪ **Exploration is vital** – set up your character and get out there. Talk to people and get a feel for the world. Once you've got an idea of what you want to do as a profession, check out the Stratics website to glean expert advice for folk starting out. If you need specific questions answering, post to Devboard where punters are more than happy to offer advice and opinions. Check out the Ultima Online... Online panel (left) for site addresses. If you're really stuck, drop Adrian a line on aselby@iname.com.

✪ **Don't go into the dungeons** until you're well hard – you'll be killed instantly. Check Stratics' articles on magery and warrior professions to see what kind of skills you'll need.

✪ **Develop magic resistance** and hiding (always good in a tight spot). Adrian also recommends that your character should have at least 50 points (out of a possible 100) for magery so that you can teleport out of a dungeon or heal yourself. Make sure that your character also has 50 points for resist – developing magical skills once you've started is costly and difficult. Most other skills are relatively easy to develop in comparison.

✪ **Save up some money** so if you're killed, you can head for the nearest town, get yourself kitted out again and head straight back out.

✪ **You can have five characters** per shard (server). Remember that you can't have one character with all skills. Use each character to support the other, ie have a tailor earning the cash who can then hand it over to your warrior if that trip to the dungeon didn't pay off.

✪ **Be good.** You might like the idea of being a Hannibal Lector-type in Britannia, but you'll be arrested as soon as you enter a town or city. Not much fun eh?

To the right... no, we meant left... Hey, we know you're encased in three tonnes of metal, but you could at least make an effort...

"This is a sword," says Adrian. No, really?

the respect of his gaming peers. Oh, and buys a castle. It's only taken Adrian ten months and 20 hours a week to get to this point.

So just what is the appeal of spending so much time and money on such an endeavour? It's just a game... right? "Each session is different," waxes Adrian. "You create goals each time you log on, or continue to pursue long-term ones of your own choosing. If you want to beg and spend all your money on ale or simply hassle people, you can; if you want to fish and cook and sell the fish steaks, you can. You can slay dragons, tailor clothes, shepherd and tame animals, learn poisoning, baking – it's up to you."

At this point, we checked the *Ultima Online* employee list just to make sure we weren't falling victim to a cunning sales rep from Origin, but

Adrian is the real deal. To be frank, the game doesn't need marketing anyway – he's incessantly rabbiting on about it to his mates as well: "They've been shaking their heads in disbelief for a long time at my phone bill," says Adrian. "One mate, James, took the plunge and bought it a few months back. Now, sadly, we sit down the pub and discuss guild matters while egging on my other

> **"Ask Adrian about his best moments online and it's like listening to a doddery old veteran recalling the heady camaraderie of WW2"**

muckers to get the game." And how do they respond to such pleas? The answer's short and sweet: "They call us the Stepford Wives."

Isn't there anything he hates about the game though? The £120 a month spent on phone charges? Time that could be better spent, let's say, socialising in the real world? While

the phone bill will always be a thorn in his side, Adrian also wants to see improved graphics and an easier start-up process for newbies (see the Newbie Guide To UO panel, page 61).

A HOPELESS CASE

Despite these gripes though, PC ZONE has never witnessed someone so utterly in love and happy with their lot in life – ask him about his fondest moments online and it's like listening to a doddery old veteran recalling the camaraderie of WW2: "I remember the guild's tailors all singing national anthems and telling *Monty Python* stories in Magincia's tailor shop," reminisces Adrian. " Dying on a lonely island in Shame at the hands of earth elementals and calling out to my guild mates. They dropped what they were doing, teleported in, resurrected me, got my stuff back and got me to safety without so much as a word."

Enough

already! PC ZONE quietly leaves, the misty eyes of Adrian's nostalgia proving rather too much. Maybe the *Daily Mail*'s hysterical headlines about gaming addiction were right after all... (You're fired – Ed)

I can't believe they've stolen my spellbook. The bastards.

SAD TYPES

While Adrian may lead a respectable life in Britannia, there are others who are more than happy to let it all hang out in public by creating 'toon' panels of their 'adventures' for fellow travellers to read. *PC ZONE* presents two such 'characters'

JIGGIBY-THE FOUL MOUTHED DRUNKEN BARD
www.jiggiby.com/

Full-on stories, limericks and toons boasting some of the filthiest language this side of an Ice-T CD. Detailing the boozy, leery and depraved ways of Jiggiby, punters can follow his sordid ass as he gets drunk, falls over a lot, curses like an East End used car salesman, and tries to get laid whenever possible. We're pretty sure that his approach hasn't been featured in any of Origin's game publicity... Be warned though, this guy's even more offensive than Charlie Brooker.

IMANEWBIE
http://imanewbie.crossroadsrpg.com/

Ah, bless. A far more mild-mannered affair detailing the hopeless efforts of Imanewbie who looks like the result of a sweaty night of passion between a *Renta-Ghost* character and a Monster Raving Loony candidate. Again boasting tons of toons, Imanewbie takes a light-hearted if über-geeky look at his distinctly unheroic struggles in Britannia. To be honest, we'd rather go on the piss with Jiggiby though – just so we could use him as a punch bag at the end of the evening...

Jiggiby, a real card and no mistake.

The misadventures of Imanewbie. Hilarious.

The Elder Scrolls Adventures
REDGUARD

SHARPEN YOUR SWORD... AND YOUR WITS

DISCOVER SWASHBUCKLING ADVENTURE LIKE NEVER BEFORE. YOU ARE CYRUS, A REDGUARD MERCENARY WHO HAS RETURNED TO HIS HOMELAND TO FIND IT IN PERIL. THE QUEST LEADS FROM THE IRON GOVERNOR, TO A RESTLESS BAND OF PIRATES, AND EVEN INTO ANOTHER DIMENSION. YOU'LL SOLVE THEIR PUZZLES, WITH BOTH YOUR WITS AND YOUR SWORD, AND LIVE AN EPIC STORY. ACTION, ADVENTURE AND STORYTELLING ARE ALL COMBINED IN THE GENRE BREAKING GAME THAT IS REDGUARD.
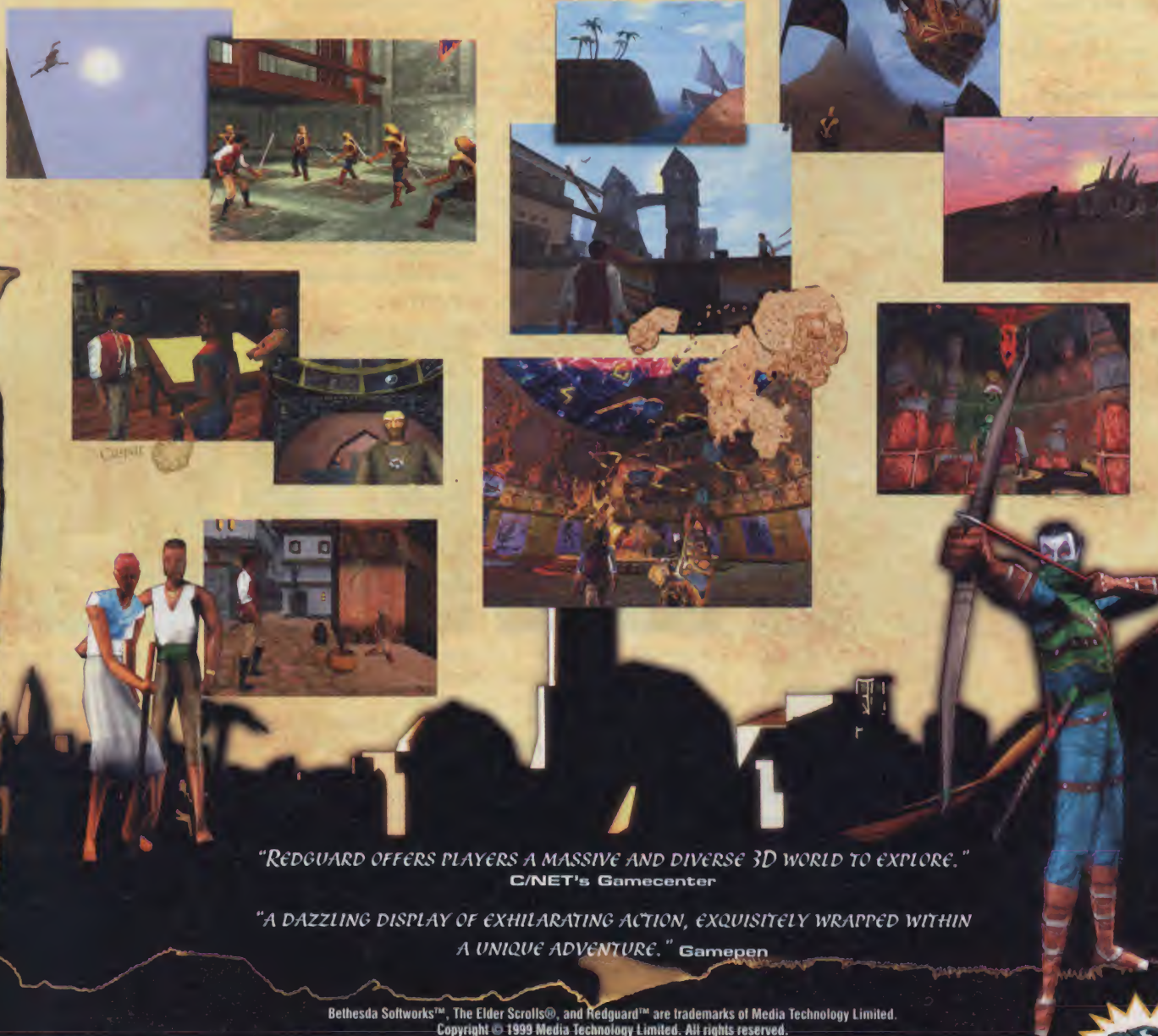
"REDGUARD OFFERS PLAYERS A MASSIVE AND DIVERSE 3D WORLD TO EXPLORE."
C/NET's Gamecenter

"A DAZZLING DISPLAY OF EXHILARATING ACTION, EXQUISITELY WRAPPED WITHIN A UNIQUE ADVENTURE." **Gamepen**

WHAT'S ON YOUR HARD DRIVE?

This month the good citizens of Coventry share their gaming highlights and computing disasters

✪ **WORDS** Craig Vaughan **PHOTOGRAPHY** Fiona Wilson **LOCATION** Coventry

ALEX PYE
18, disaster management student

What's on your hard drive?
"Nothing – I've just fitted a brand new one. I'll be re-installing all my flight sims now."
Have you had any disasters with your PC?
"Yeah, I recently killed my mate Chris's PC by statically charging a balloon while inebriated – but he doesn't know it was my fault."
He does now. Let's hope Chris Harding isn't studying law...

MATTHEW COLLINS
17, uniform studies student

What's on your hard drive?
"*SimCity 2000* and the *Command & Conquer* series."
Lots of strategy there, have you ever lost control?
"Yeah, I kept getting stomped by Godzilla in *SimCity 2000*, so I turned off all the disaster options – then I got sacked for eco-terrorism because I'd chopped all the trees down to build some tower blocks."

SIMON GODDEN
24, assistant games shop manager

What's on your hard drive?
"*Half-Life* and *SiN*."
Would you recommend them?
"*Half-Life* is stunning, and the marines are as hard as nails. I finished *SiN* in a day; I'd have been quicker but the bugs slowed me down."
What's the most stupid question you've been asked by a customer?
"'Do you sell games?' Bear in mind they've walked past 4000 titles to ask that question."

SHARON BISSELL
37, housewife

What's on your hard drive?
"I don't really know, it's my husband's PC. I'm here buying him a birthday present (*Pinball Express, the lucky chap! – Ed*)."
What's the machine used for?
"It was bought for my daughters, for 'educational purposes'."
Excellent... what have they been doing with it?
"Playing *Return Of Arcade*, the *Titanic* games, *Virtual Pool* and *Actua Soccer*."
Thank god for secondary education.

LEE NEILSON
26, customer services assistant

What's on your hard drive?
"I'm still hooked on the original *Carmageddon*."
Do you 'Drive Miss Daisy' or go 'Mad Max'?
"Mad Max – I enjoy the mayhem. I love having a few pints and then painting the streets red – it's drink-driving and vehicular homicide without real-life consequences."
It makes you wonder which pub he bought his driving licence from...

CLINTON DAKIN
21, unemployed

What's on your hard drive?
"*Quake II, Half-Life, Carmageddon* and *Anno 1602*."
So killing folk makes you feel good?
"Yeah, it relieves the stress imposed by owning a PC that crashes twice a day. Thankfully, I've got a PlayStation and a Saturn too."
A Saturn, surely some mistake?
"No – placed correctly it stops the draft in my bedroom."

ROBERT DAVIES
18, computer science student

What's on your hard drive?
"I've just finished *Half-Life* and *Tomb Raider II*."
Are you going to buy anything?
"Yeah, I'm after *Mortal Kombat 4, Tomb Raider III* or *SiN*."
What state's your PC in?
"My mate Phil Lane put a network card in and buggered my hard drive. Could you tell your readers that he spends most of his time on 'Nude Raider' Internet sites?"
No, sorry – that would be inflammatory.

JEFF CLARKE
25, sales assistant

What's on your hard drive?
"Strategy games."
Ah, you're a control freak?
"No, I've got a retarded PC – they're the only games that will run on it. I play *Tetris* (slowly) and *WarCraft 2* (even more slowly). Can I make a public service announcement?"
OK, shoot.
"Don't put PlayStation discs in your PC. I did it recently and had to use the old 'throw the CD drive against the wall' method to sort things out."

EDWARD MORAN
18, software engineering student

What's on your hard drive?
"Hundreds of clusters and thousands of 'data streams' in 'Fat 32' file formation – that's a programming joke. Actually I'm a bit of a *Championship Manager* freak, so I'm gagging for the next instalment."
Had any PC disasters?
"Yeah, my young cousin recently shagged my hard drive. I'd backed up my data only hours earlier – it's an occupational hazard, and a lesson for us all."

LARA CROFT
Age not disclosed (you don't ask a lady), über gaming babe

Lara, what brings you here?
"I'm keeping 'abreast' of all the latest games and supervising sales of my latest outing, *Tomb Raider III*."
How's the game selling?
"Since I got my big weapons out, the sales have been remarkable."
I do like a girl with a sense of humour...

PCZONE REVIEWS

Don't spend a single penny until you've checked out the *ZONE* reviews first

THE HALL OF SHAME

◯ These are the games that we still haven't been sent for review. This means they're either completely crap and the publishers are scared we'll pan them, or their PR machine isn't quite up to full speed. This month's offenders (some of them have been in our Hall of Shame for some time, eh Maxis?) are...

LULA VIRTUAL BABE Take 2
STREETS OF SIMCITY Maxis/EA
BUST-A-MOVE 2 Acclaim
UBIK Cryo
REAH Black Friar

REVIEWS YOU CAN TRUST

We at *ZONE* pride ourselves on telling you exactly what we think. Our writers are the most experienced and talented reviewers in the business. They're all experts in their chosen genre and they won't pull any punches – if a game's not worth buying, we'll tell you why. But we don't leave it there. We also want to know what you think of the games that come out, which is why we've got our Feedback section on page 100. This is where you get the opportunity to get your point of view into *PC ZONE*. If you've got a comment to make, then we want to hear it.

OVER 40 PC GAMES REVIEWED & RATED
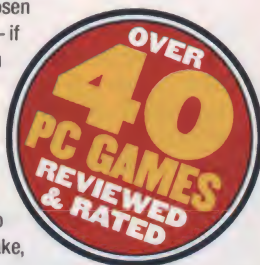
DON'T BELIEVE THE JARGON

The standard spec machine these days is a P166 with 32Mb of memory – but before buying any game you need to make sure it will work on your system. Because the technical specs on packaging can sometimes be a little optimistic to say the least, make sure you check out the 'We say' bit in our tech specs box at the start of reviews. This is where we report on what we think the minimum tech specs should be. If a game runs like a tortoise on the machine listed by the publishers, then we'll tell you. All the games reviewed are tested on the minimum-spec PC as quoted on the packaging.

WHAT DO OUR SCORES MEAN?

PCZONE CLASSIC **90-100%** Here at *ZONE* we score every game out of 100. If a game receives a score of 90 or above, it is awarded the *PC ZONE* Classic award. These games are original, innovative, compelling and are worth buying even if you're not a fan of the genre.

PCZONE RECOMMENDED **80-89%** If a game scores 80-89% it's awarded a *PC ZONE* Recommended award. Games that fall into this category are excellent examples of their type, and if you're a fan of the genre they're well worth buying.

70-79% Games that score in this region don't win any awards, but they're above average and well worth a look. If you're not a fan of the genre though, they will probably offer limited long-term appeal.

20-69% These games are below average and you should really only consider parting with your cash if you're a big fan of the series or genre or you see it at a reduced price.

PCZONE PANTS **0-19%** Games that score under 20% should be avoided. They offer little in the way of long-term appeal, can be frustrating, and definitely aren't much fun. If a game is seriously bugged then it will also fall into this category. You have been warned.

68 LANDS OF LORE III

72 ALPHA CENTAURI

76 SIMCITY 3000

80 MYTH II: SOULBLIGHTER

82 WORMS ARMAGEDDON

84 DELTA FORCE

LANDS OF

⭐ £34.99 • Westwood Studios • Out March

Breaking new ground in the role-playing genre – and not a goblin in sight! As *Paul Mallinson* is about to explain…

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 **Memory** 32Mb RAM **SUPPORTS** Most 3D accelerator cards and sound cards **WE SAY** Surprisingly alright in software, but play it with a 3D card and at least 64Mb RAM for the smoothest ride

PC ZONE CLASSIC

➔ A hideously mangled body? What the flippin' heck's been going on here, then?!

Role-playing games, according to some people here in the *PC ZONE* office (namely Steve Hill and Charlie Brooker), have something of a social stigma attached to them. Usually they are thought of as the domain of sweaty, over-nourished bearded types who sit alone in a darkened room wearing naught but a T-shirt and a pair of four-day-old underpants for bodily company. Well, let me tell you that this is *not* the case, as Westwood Studios have proved in the past and are about to prove again with this, the third instalment in the ever-expanding *Lands Of Lore* series.

Yes, *Lands Of Lore III is* a role-playing game, but it's above and beyond what many associate with the dice-rolling and goblin-slaying of many traditional RPGs. In essence this game is a combination of adventure, RPG and action game, held together with a strong narrative, luscious visuals and a damn near watertight interface – diverse enough to appeal to almost anyone, least of all your average stereotyped role-playing crusty.

THE ONLY SURVIVOR

Following on from where *Guardians Of Destiny* (*PCZ #56*, 92%) – the second *Lands Of Lore* adventure – left off, episode three sees you in the shoes of young heir to the throne Copper LrGre, out hunting with his father, Richard (the King) and two elder brothers. The obligatory Westwood-style pre-rendered cut-scene picks up the story with an argument between the brothers. All is not well in this land of magic and monsters. And, it transpires, things are about to get much worse.

As the party readies to hunt, a pack of skinless, razor-toothed beasts appear from nowhere, killing the King and his two sons in the blink of an eye. Copper is the only survivor, having been savaged by the beasts, dropped down a hole and left for dead.

When Copper eventually comes to, and you regain control, your first major task is to return to the safety of the city of Gladstone and piece together some semblance of reasoning behind these brutal slayings.

EASY LIKE SUNDAY MORNING

When the game begins proper, Copper is left dazed in a leafy glade and must gather his rucksack and find himself a weapon before regaining his bearings. The setting, as you would expect from a game these days, is depicted in full first-person 3D – a mixture of texture-mapped polygons and voxel sprites – and is more than adequate for the purposes of this game. Moving around is simplicity itself, achieved by using the mouse and, if so wished, a combination of keys. A *Quake*-style mouse system is available for looking around: double left-click to jump; right-click to attack with whatever weapon is currently equipped (nothing at the start of the game). Action game veterans will of course ➔

ALSO CONSIDER

LANDS OF LORE: GUARDIANS OF DESTINY (Westwood, £14.99) The prequel to *LOL III* is still a great adventure game, but it too is let down by a lacklustre graphics engine. *PCZ #56, 92%*

FINAL FANTASY VII (Eidos, £34.99) Absolutely huge Japanese-style role-playing game. Go for this if you prefer something less 'AD&D'-oriented. *PCZ #66, 93%*

REALMS OF THE HAUNTING (Gremlin, £29.99) British-made horror adventure with strong shoot 'em up overtones. Definitely worth a look if you prefer gameplay over graphics. *PCZ #47, 93%*

The fire effect is very good… at burning your character to a cinder.

Portals suck you in if you get too close.

LORE III

66 *Lands Of Lore III* is a combination of adventure, RPG and action game, held together with a strong narrative and a watertight interface 99

define a set-up that proves most comfortable, enabling them to strafe/jump/duck using the keyboard, and look around/fight using the mouse. Whatever, there are enough options to cater for everyone, and within no time at all you're leaping around, picking up food and items and slaughtering wild boar (the most prominent nasty at the beginning of the

The Shattered Desert level is set on a planet dying from Tiberium poisoning. And that monster is too close for comfort – *ooft!*

game) with the greatest of ease. Other basic on-screen essentials indicate your health status, mana levels, direction of facing and amount of cash you're currently carrying (see The Front End panel below for the full low-down).

JAM-PACKED

Managing your possessions is of paramount importance. *Lands Of Lore III* is absolutely stuffed with magical items/weapons/tasty morsels, and your inventory is of a finite size. Hitting the 'I' key (or whatever you've defined as the inventory key) shrinks the screen to a quarter of its full screen size, brings up your general inventory, and shows current experience, hunger and weapons/ armour slots. Less experienced players will find the 'tool tips' text and online help system extremely useful early in the game, and as you learn to make use of the fantastic automap/log book – or The Journal, as it's called in the game – it's no time

at all before you've made your way out of the jungle and back to the safety of the city of Gladstone.

EVIL UNLEASHED

Once there, the story of Copper and the predicament he is in is explained fully in another excellent pre-rendered cut-sequence.

It turns out that an ancient being has unleashed its evil through portals leading to five different worlds. Not only that, but you discover that your soul was taken away from you by the demons who killed your father. Closing the portals and regaining your soul are the two main tasks of the ever expanding plot.

Before you can begin your quest though, the first thing you are told to do is go out and join a guild. Unlike the previous *Lands Of Lore* adventure, *LOL III* contains more 'traditional' RPG elements, and learning a trade by joining a guild is just one of them. By talking to the many characters scattered throughout Gladstone you eventually discover four

"F**king hell! What's that?!" – is something you'll say often.

Remember to keep feeding your character or he'll starve.

Running around the jungle can get quite boar-ing (guffaw!).

THE FRONT END

You've got the items you need... Here's how to keep track of them

RPGs are sometimes blighted by over-complex and under thought-out inventory/status screens. *Lands Of Lore III* is actually blessed with a system that is complex enough to provide that all-essential depth, while remaining simple enough to use without much hindrance.

KEY

1 Play area	**7** Spell belt
2 Might (Strength)	**8** Weapon/armour slots
3 Protection	**9** Magic item slots
4 Range weapons skill	**10** Hunger level
5 Melee skill	**11** Gold
6 Mana	**12** Journal

13 Compass
14 Inventory/full screen
15 Familiar controls
16 Familiar health
17 Inventory display
18 Health

LOOKS FAMILIAR

Getting to grips with the interface

At the beginning of the adventure you get the chance to select a sidekick – or 'familiar' – from a list of four. All have differing abilities and are prepared to help you out if a fight ensues. You have to be careful though, because once selected whoever you've chosen stays with you for the duration of the game.

LIG (fighter)
The Iron Golem, available from the fighters guild, is a hard nut who really loves to swing a sword. Lig also sniffs out food for you if you're running low. A perfect partner if you'd rather concentrate on magic than on mangling.

GRISELDA (magic user)
This mouthy little Homunculus casts spells at anyone who attacks you. She also has a knack of finding Pharmacopoeia items, knows quite a few helpful recipes, and is good at identifying magical items.

GOLDIE (cleric)
Not the gold-toothed drum 'n' bass maestro from the Midlands, but a helpful magic-user/healer who's good at lighting up the darkness or protecting you from magical attacks. Doesn't do well with direct physical attacks.

SYRUSS (thief)
This thief is very good at pilfering from shops, and can spot hidden doorways at 20 paces. He is also the most knowledgeable of all the familiars and often dishes out much useful information and advice.

The improved 3D engine gives more of a sense of scale.

Lands Of Lore III is a 'family' game and does not feature full-frontal nudity. Shame.

"'Ere, Marsha, check out dat coloured lighting."

Those who played *Lands Of Lore (Throne Of Chaos)* may recognise certain parts of this game, such as the entrance to the Draracle's cave.

guilds (see Get A Job panel below right), each offering a particular type of 'class' alignment (fighter, magic user, healer or thief), plus services (training etc) and Familiars (see Looks Familiar panel on page 70) pertaining to that particular lifestyle. Once you've chosen what kind of person you're going to play, it's time to start building experience points by completing sub-quests and killing monsters.

BEAUTY IS ONLY SKIN DEEP

Once the game has opened up and you've discovered the first portal, you should be in control of a fairly handy persona with some weaponry and a mixed bag of rudimentary spells. It's here that you begin to realise just how 'sucked in' you are becoming.

Lands Of Lore III is in many ways reminiscent of Gremlin's classic *Realms Of The Haunting* (PCZ #47, 93%) – genuinely scary at times, and dripping with atmosphere the whole time you play. Another trait it shares with *Realms Of The Haunting* is that the graphics could be a hell of a lot better. *Lands Of Lore III*'s texture-mapped polygons are cool enough. There's a far greater sense of scale this time around, and the coloured lighting adds a heck of a lot to it, but the lack of perspective correction ruins the effect when you look up and down. On top of this, the non-player characters – created using a voxel 3D system – are not as effective as one would have hoped. That said, if you can ignore these deficiencies and get on with the game, there's a lot to be said for the astounding atmosphere conjured up by the combination of visuals, music and sound effects.

MORE OPEN-ENDED

What makes this game such an outstanding long-term prospect, though, is the scope of the adventure and the open-endedness of the role-playing. The storytelling is fairly linear, but the way you build up your character is completely up to you. There are shops this time around (not a feature of the last game), and the populated towns actually bustle with a fair degree of

realism. In many ways this game is what Bethesda's grand-but-flawed *Daggerfall* (PCZ #43, 65%) should have been.

The attention to detail is astounding. Water ripples convincingly; birds peck at the ground and fly away when you near them; the dialogue is witty,

> ❝ *Lands Of Lore III* is dripping with atmosphere the entire time you are playing ❞

and never seems to cut out unexpectedly or play out of context; there are some wonderful 'particle' effects when spells are cast; and there's a built-in 'auto save' option which saves the game at intervals specified by you.

There's little to annoy about this game (apart from the missed opportunity in the graphics department). The fact that your character can't swim is a bit of a pisser, as is the inability to select stacked items in your inventory (you have to take them one by one). Other than that, there's not much wrong with it. If you're looking for an easily accessible, long-term graphic adventure with role-playing elements and plenty of combat, then look no further than *Lands Of Lore III* – there simple isn't anything better on the PC at the moment. PCZ

PCZVERDICT

⊕ **UPPERS** Massive game demanding lots of hours of play • Easy to get into • Role-playing elements work well • Witty dialogue • Superb presentation

⊖ **DOWNERS** Graphics are not what you'd call state-of-the-art • Your character can't swim • Disc-swapping sometimes tiresome (four CDs)

90 PC role-playing at its very best

A lightning bolt to the temple can't be much good for you.

The automap is handy. Areas of note can be tagged with colour-coded text messages.

Don't fall into the water or you'll drown. Strange but true.

GET A JOB

An overview of the guilds you can join in the game

A young man of your age needs a trade, something to make you a useful citizen. It's your choice: join one, join them all, join none. Each guild has quests for you to perform. Complete them and you are rewarded with gifts, money and access to guild secrets. Note: if you join just the one guild you get a ten per cent bonus on your experience levels for that particular class of character.

THE IRON RING

The fighter's guild gives classes in both hand-to-hand combat and archery. The Iron Ring is also the primary source of weapons and armour in Gladstone.

THE TALAMARI

Spell-casters of the world unite and take over... or join this magic-oriented guild. It has the fewest members, but is by far the most powerful.

ORDER OF THE FINCH

Don't mistake this as a guild for weaklings – clerics know how to swing a sword as well as cast powerful spells. They can also restore dead familiars.
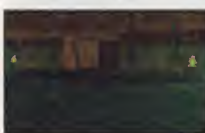
THE BACCHANAL

Be warned: the thief's guild is hardly a guild at all, and is difficult to find at first. Join it, though, and the rewards can be plentiful.

✪ WALKTHROUGH

BOX SHIFTER

Remember: explore every nook and cranny – you never know what you will find or where it will lead you

1 Mmm... I wonder what's under this big box.

2 Let's try moving it. How about in here?

3 Ah yes – a hidden switch behind the bookcase.

4 The switch, once pressed... reveals a hole.

5 Some steps leading down. Time to adventure on...

ALPHA CENTAURI

★ £39.99 • Electronic Arts • Out now

It's by Sid Meier. It's turn-based. And it's set in the future. It's also *Civilization III* in all but name. *Andrew Wright* is about to find out all this and more

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM **Processor** P133 **Memory** 16Mb RAM **SUPPORTS** Any Windows-compatible sound and graphics cards **WE SAY** P166 with 32Mb RAM for smooth play

PC ZONE CLASSIC

ON THE CD

ALSO CONSIDER

CIVILIZATION II (Power Plus, £12.99) It isn't set in space, but the gameplay is almost identical, as is the 3D isometric view, and it can still keep you up all night. *PCZ #36 90%*

MASTERS OF ORION 2 (MicroProse, £9.99) Equally addictive turn-based empire-builder set in the distant future. Excellent value, hard to fault. *PCZ #45 88%*

Back in 1991, it was *Sid Meier's Civilization* that proved just what a turn-based strategy game could do to your social life and sleep pattern. Six years after that, the sequel, *Civilization II* (*PCZ #36*, 90%), brought a raft of extra units and technologies, and an isometric map view – and at well over a million sales it sold even better than the original. So roll on *Civilization III*, right?

Not quite. Activision and MicroProse own the rights to *Civilization* and are due to release *Civilization: Call To Power* and *Civ III* respectively some time soon. However, Sid Meier, the inspiration behind the original games, is now with Firaxis. While he can't use the word 'Civilization' on the box, there's nothing to stop him coming up with the same game disguised by a few zillion tweaks here and there, and a completely new set of units, weapons, races and technologies. Well, Sid is obviously aware of this, because that's exactly what he's done.

Alpha Centauri is *Civilization* all over again, with the same 'I'll be up to bed later, dear' gameplay and some futuristic intergalactic knobs on. Both *Civ I and II* ended with one or other of the human tribes developing interplanetary flight, and a spaceship setting off for the nearest star outside the Earth's solar system. That star, of course, was Alpha Centauri.

MOTHER OF ALL SHIPS

Alpha Centauri the game starts with a big mothership orbiting a habitable planet 40 years in the future. When the ship's captain is assassinated, the crew split into seven factions and leave for the planet surface in separate escape pods. You choose which one of the seven crew factions you'd like to play. Unlike the tribes in *Civ*, the differences are ideological and visionary rather than down to nationality, and the game gives them a very different treatment as well as very different AIs.

In short, you have to build an empire all over again. There's a completely new world with rendered 3D terrain to explore, 75 new technologies, 60 base upgrades, 32,000 possible unit types and a much-improved interface to find your way around. In true *Civ* style, you build a base or two with military units to defend them, and open up new areas while you research bigger, better and more powerful units.

You can direct your research towards an array of new weapons, from quantum lasers to the awesome graviton gun, and there's even the prospect of psionic combat. You can design

⊙ WALKTHROUGH

HIT THE GROUND RUNNING...

Seasoned *Civilization* players will be pretty familiar with the way *Alpha Centauri* works. But just in case you've had your head in the sand for the last few years, here's a quick newbies' guide to how to get started...

0 To start, select a map: standard, huge or random. You can customise it by altering the rainfall, percentage of ocean and so on. Select one of six difficulty levels, the rules you want to play (again standard or custom) and the faction you want to play.

> **"It might be *Civilization* in a space suit, but it's still the best turn-based strategy game you're ever likely to see"**

This base is growing nicely thanks to some careful choices, but some heavy terraforming is the next step.

custom units by bolting different weapons, armour and weird and wonderful special items such as communication jammers or blink displacers to land, sea or air platforms. Units include infantry, wheeled vehicles, hovertanks, sea skimmers, destroyers, cruisers, and aircraft such as fixed-wing types and helicopters. It doesn't work out as well as you'd expect, because with the computer doing the prototyping you always get

the best ones anyway. Never mind, you can still have some fun.

There's no pottery, wheel or irrigation in *Alpha* (this *is* the twenty-third century, after all), but many of the advances and secret projects (equivalent to the Wonders of the World) do much the same as their *Civ* equivalents. The first faction to research 'Secrets of the human brain', for example, gets a second free advance, just like 'Philosophy'

ENID

2 After the animation of your escape pod landing on the planet, take a good look at where you've been dumped. The pink squares are xenofungus, which reduces movement and affects combat; the grey blobs are rocks, which don't help your agriculture but do boost mineral production; and the blue crystals are cool because you get a mining bonus.

3 Click on the base square and note how the base automatically harvests the resources on the best squares for producing nutrients (that's food to you and me). You can alter this to enhance mineral or energy production at any time by clicking on another square in the base screen.

4 By default your first unit is a military one – in the Spartans' case a neat little buggy called a scout rover – but then the base switches to building a colony pod. Sod that. Click the Change button in the production box (lower left) and switch production to a cheap infantry unit for base defence.
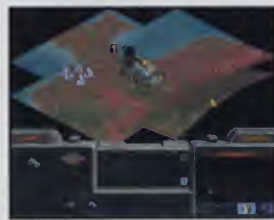
5 Exploring is your next priority. You could right-click on your scout, select Action... and then set it to auto-explore, but that's a little boring at this stage. Hold down the left mouse button and drag a line to wherever you want it to go. Note that it will route itself around fungus due to movement penalties.

6 Look what we've found! The dustbin lid thingy is a piece of your mothership. With any luck it will give you a free technological advance, or at least an extra unit (a bit like the native villages in *Civ II*). At worst it will be bulging with alien mindworms but, hey, nobody said Alpha Centauri was a friendly place.
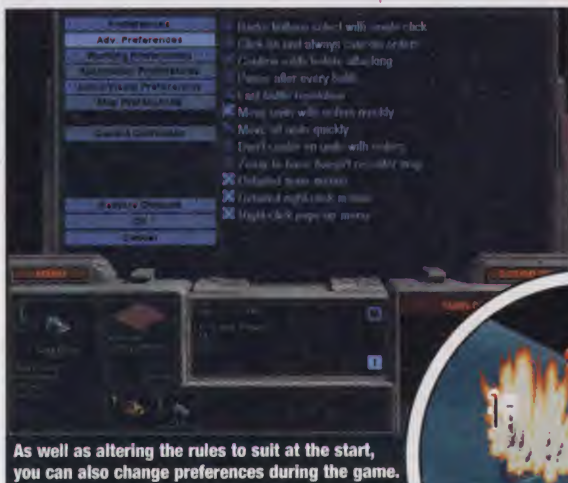
As well as altering the rules to suit at the start, you can also change preferences during the game.

Naval warfare 23rd century style – a chaos battlecruiser gets shot up by another faction's ships.

This late in the game, you have lots of choices on units, even if you've retired a few along the way.

in *Civ II*. It doesn't stop there either – recycling tanks equate to a marketplace, recreation commons to temples, and command centres to barracks. Instead of settlers and engineers you get terraformers and pods: the former to add farms, roads and all kinds of improvements, the latter to create new bases.

HEY, LET'S TRANSCEND

The objectives are loosely the same, only this time the human race aims for transcendence (yeah, man) by building a successful society and a balanced environment, and removing any enemies by diplomacy or warfare. The research pathway gives you endless variety, as you'd expect, but the AI is a vast improvement over previous Sid Meier titles, and you can win the game without too much bloodshed if that's your sad, pathetic preference. Me, I like a few good battles and plenty of destruction. Then again, that's unlikely to win me many friends.

The planet has some awkward indigenous life-forms, including xenofungus which hinders movement, and the deadly mindworms (roughly equivalent to those annoying *Civ* barbarians). The maps also lean towards being much more hostile to base-building than the maps of Earth, but that's where terraforming

comes in. Not only can you remove the pink fungus, you can also build the simple things in life like farms, mines and roads, and take on more complex projects such as lowering or raising the height of the land, altering rainfall patterns and so on. You can also use terraformers

> **❝More of the same terrific gameplay, but this time there are so many bells, whistles and new ways of thinking that you'll wonder what hit you❞**

like weapons to make the surface less useful to your opponents.

Another excellent innovation is that the game works out the borders between each faction and shows them on the map. Trespass over one and you find yourself on the receiving end of a diplomatic note, the contents of which match the faction's profile. Do the same thing again and some factions actively discourage you from hanging around.

This is as good a point as any to mention the superb AI, which

really sets *Alpha Centauri* apart from the crowd. At the highest level, the AI-controlled factions take on real personalities and play an excellent game. Unlike with *Civ*, you don't get bothered by pointless messages that end up in slanging matches. They only call you when they've something to say – you've just got to work out what you can get out of it.

PACTS OF LIFE

Diplomatic options include alliances which simply boost trade, pacts, declarations of a vendetta or war, demands to leave territory, or a somewhat less certain peace. You can also initiate technology changes, lending or borrowing credits, handing over or asking for units and bases, and requesting votes in the planetary council. Getting to be chairman is a big benefit.

The clever thing is that you don't feel as though you're negotiating with a few lines of IF… THEN… ELSE… code – the players all behave much as you'd expect given their personalities and goals. During one game, I successfully managed to grab impact laser technology for the loss of something fairly worthless, and formed a safe

alliance on my western border into the bargain. Later, when under attack from the east, I got the same player to help me out – but his price was an even neater bit of technology I'd just researched! Eventually, after a draining war lasting 20 years, I made peace in the east at the cost of a base they'd ruined anyway. It just felt… well, real.

Lower down the scale, you can install an AI 'governor' in each base and order it to follow one of four lines of production: conquer, build, discover or explore. It automatically builds units, carries out improvements and researches technologies to employ in those tasks, although you can intervene in the short term if you need to thanks to a production queuing system. It's very handy when you've got ten bases and some front-line action that's taking up most of your time.

Even individual units can be AI-controlled. Terraformers can be left to get on with their jobs, scouts sent to explore, and military units given commands like explore, hold, destroy enhancements, stay on alert, patrol or return to base. Waypoints have also been introduced, giving you the option to send units on a set route – away from enemy units or territory, for example.

The sea is almost as important – and as useful – as land, and you can build ocean bases, farm the sea and even produce minerals. If the plot of land you've been given is causing you problems, the sea is just as good, although slightly more difficult to defend. That said, there are plenty of naval units to choose from.

Alpha Centauri wouldn't be much of a game these days if it didn't include serious multiplayer features. In addition to network and Internet play, there's the good old serial link that, sadly, many companies seem to have dropped, and the option to time turns or make movement non-simultaneous. This means that you can make your moves, then tend your bases and conduct diplomacy without running out of time or annoying your opponents by taking too long.

IT'S A CRACKER

Alpha Centauri might have only just hit the streets, but it already looks like a classic in the making. Beginners needn't worry about the extra level of complexity, because you can switch on various automation options and customisable rules, and there's an excellent AI-inspired tutorial that

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⊙ WALKTHROUGH   END

UNDER ATTACK!

When the going gets tough, the tough get stuck in and give as good as they get. Alternatively, there might well be a diplomatic solution to hostilities somewhere…

1 For some reason I never explored that strip of land properly. Now my Spartans (black flags) find themselves right next to some angry Galan Stepdaughters (green units).

2 Except I forgot about those bloody infuriating probes.

3 Incoming! Here comes my favourite unit, a needlejet aircraft, to blow someone away. But not before the Gaians nick a couple of secrets and destroy half the base's population.

4 There's only one thing to do to prevent a long and expensive war – go crawling to Deirdre and ask her for a truce.

"Weather is weird, no German tourists, wish you were here..."

works with all maps – even ones you've designed yourself. The graphics are a little cluttered, but it's hard to see how else they could have been implemented, although the 3D terrain and step-by-step zoom more than make up for this.

For *Civ* fans, *Alpha* offers more of the same terrific gameplay, but this time there are so many bells, whistles and completely new ways of thinking that you'll wonder what hit you. Okay, it might be *Civilization* in a space suit, but it's still arguably the best turn-based strategy game you're ever likely to see. **PCZ**

PCZVERDICT

🔼 **UPPERS** Terrific AI • Loads of new units • Endless gameplay • Multiple zoom levels

🔽 **DOWNERS** Complicated research • Cluttered graphics

92
It's *Civilization*, but not as we know it

The number of reports available is staggering. This shows all your bases and what they're doing. Under governor control or just playing pot luck.

At stages you must propel lab nerds to go one way or another.
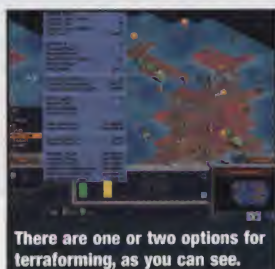
There are one or two options for terraforming, as you can see.

This advanced society might find it time to change policy.

So what kind of society do you want to create? Each has its pluses and minuses, but you can't go far wrong with a democracy based on mind control. Or so Tony Blair thinks.
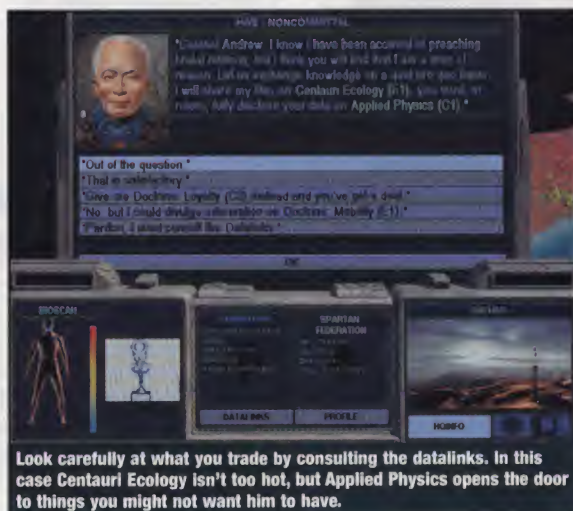
Look carefully at what you trade by consulting the datalinks. In this case Centauri Ecology isn't too hot, but Applied Physics opens the door to things you might not want him to have.

⊙ WALKTHROUGH

OKAY, THIS MEANS WAR!

Alpha Centauri follows the *Civ* style of unit description, so you start off with 1-1-1 units where the figures are attack, defence and movement respectively. Better still, *Alpha* units can have two special powers on top, such as AA capability or cloaking devices

1 In *Alpha* you start with the basic stuff and work up. These plasma sentinels are the best defensive unit in the early to middle stages of the game. With just one in your base, you know it's safe.

2 Once you've developed missiles, handy little units like this 6-3-2 missile speeder can dish it out and take it too.

3 By the time you've researched the doctrine of air power, these 6-1-10 missile penetrators can get in and out quickly while delivering some hefty firepower. The only problem is getting them back home again, as they have only limited fuel.

4 Later on in the game, on your way to getting the awesome planet-buster nuclear missile, try a chopper for size. This 16-6-16 unit can give the enemy units real nightmares and make several attacks in a turn.

SIMCITY 3000

⭐ £39.99 • Electronic Arts • Out now

Blimey! Look at the girders on that! *Mark Higham* **gets out his Workmate and starts talking town-planning**

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166MMX **Memory** 16Mb RAM **REQUIRES** 4-speed CD-ROM drive **WE SAY** You're better off with a P233 and 32Mb RAM

ALSO CONSIDER

CAESAR III (Sierra, £34.99) It's *SimCity* all over again but this time set in ancient Rome. *PCZ #70, 92%*

SIMCITY 2000 (EA Classics, £14.99) Now out on budget, check it out if you can't afford *SC3000*. *PCZ #73, 85%*

RAILROAD TYCOON 2 (Take 2, £39.99) Get all geeky over railroads thanks to this railroad simulator which is more fun than it sounds. *PCZ #71, 78%*

PC ZONE CLASSIC

Just imagine what it must be like to own your own city. Think what it would be like to wake up in the morning to that warm sense of power as thousands of people queue up to pay their council tax. With a single signature you can banish their cars from the roads, close all the hospitals and excommunicate all the kids. You could build a casino and nightclub on your doorstep and flatten your neighbours into a giant park. You could ban all traffic wardens from within a two-mile radius of your BMW... You could certainly teach the designers of Milton Keynes a thing or two.

Five years ago, the *SimCity* brand offered us the opportunity to do just that. Well, almost. As *SimCity* aficionados will already know, the beauty of *SimCity* comes in building the ultimate profit-generating city. The principle is simple: you set up residential, commercial and industrial zones then you build roads to link them together, power plants to supply them with power and an underground water network to provide them all with water. So long as you place the residential zones in pleasant spaces (ie not next to a power plant or industrial site), and the transport can get them down the shops and off to work, then your people, or 'sims' as they're known, start to move in. The more sims who move in, the more revenue you get in the form of taxes. Put taxes up too high and sims move out, but keep them too low and you run out of funds to keep building. Because it's a scenario we're all familiar with, and because we all think we could do better, it's a challenge that's eminently addictive.

As you'd expect, *SimCity 3000* expands on the basic *SimCity* formula. There are now light, medium and dense variations of residential, commercial and industrial zones. You can set up bus routes and rail links, with subways now performing a pivotal role in moving people around your city. You can build museums, colleges, libraries and jails on top of the usual fire and police stations, hospitals and parks; to get your citizens away from the TV you can even add a zoo and a ball park. The list is endless and includes over 70 worldwide landmarks boasting such beauties as Trafalgar Square, the World Trade Centre and the Eiffel Tower.

DOOM AND GLOOM

The most obviously impressive part of *SimCity 3000* though, is its graphics. With five levels of magnification, you can zoom right into a city and see every sim running about their daily business. You can click on every building to find out if it's powered and watered and whether it's

Trafalgar Square vs The World Trade Centre. The tall landmarks are the most impressive – and they help you track down the key areas of your city when you're scrolling around.

There are now five disasters. There's no sign of Godzilla anymore, but check out the UFOs.

going up in the world. But you don't have to click on these things to find out how they're doing, the graphics tell you. Derelict areas start to go black so that abandoned buildings stick out like the proverbial sore thumb. To fix the problem you can try

improving the road network or you can build parks – or you can just leave it and concentrate your resources on building other areas. In the original promises for the game, we heard that true 3D would enable you to fly through your city, but alas programmers

Maxis were being over optimistic and the game offers four isometric viewpoints instead.

As the game advances and the years roll by, new items become available to buy. At first, oil and coal power stations are your only options, but later you can buy

● WALKTHROUGH

GETTING STARTED

The fundamentals behind making a decent city are still the same. Place your residential zones too close to industry and people will move out; make them too remote and your sims will have too far to travel. Everything you do has a positive and negative effect – it's up to you to decide if it's the direction you want your city to go in
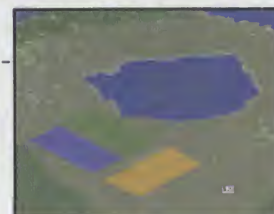
First sketch out residential (green), commercial (blue) and industrial (yellow) zones.

NICE WORK IF YOU CAN GET IT

Here's a look at a portion of a city we made earlier. After leaving it running overnight for a couple of days we managed to accumulate enough cash to fund all this

If transportation is your problem, try the rail network.

The microwave power plant doesn't cause much pollution but it costs £30,000 and only lasts 69 years.

These giant towers provide accommodation in the centre of your city. Make them sites of historical interest for a laugh.

Here are bridges for roads, highways and power cables – they're expensive but crucial.

Landfill sites can never be used again so designate space wisely.

These abandoned buildings suggest this part of town could do with some work.

Allocate funds to pay the wages of your police staff or they'll go on strike.

Parkland keeps your sims content and may increase land value.

A highway can transport sims around the city quickly and solves transportation problems, but it's expensive and requires a lot of space.

Place a variety of landmarks like the Bank of China Tower.

As time passes, fusion reactors become available. At £50,000 they're expensive but they don't give off any pollution.

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fusion reactors and microwave power plants which cause less pollution but cost more and can last less than other forms of power. You also have access to desalination and water treatment plants to help improve your water flow. All in all there are 250 different building structures. However, in *SimCity 2000* you could eventually buy giant pods which housed over 50,000 sims, but I found that even after playing up to the year 2400 these still weren't on offer.

Another new feature in *SimCity 3000* is the attention to rubbish. You can set aside areas for landfill or in time you can buy recycling centres and waste-energy incinerators. The landfill is a tempting option because it's cheap, but once part of your landscape has been filled with trash, you can never use it again. If refuse becomes a problem though, you can always pay your neighbours to take it away for you. Ah yes, the neighbours.

There are four neighbours and after building links to them you can wait for them to initiate deals. For example, build a power link over to a neighbour (at an extra cost of $2000) and they may decide to buy power from you. Build a road link and they might sell you their 'garbage' or take yours – at a cost. Build a water link and... you get the idea. Sadly, ➔

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2 Next you need to build a power station to supply your zones with electricity...
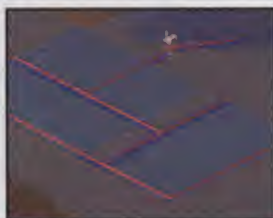
3 ...and an underground water network to provide all the zones with water.

4 Now lay some roads to make sure that your sims can get to work and the shops.

5 Your little sims start to move in and your city begins to grow.

6 Now just tinker with the taxes a bit and your bank account starts to expand, too.

The graphics are astonishingly detailed – at maximum zoom you can see each individual sim. *SC3000* employs over 65,000 colours and offers you a terrain map that's four times bigger than that in *SimCity 2000*.

It's all gone Pete Tong. Call out some strapping firemen sharpish.

Make your own fairyland thanks to the diverse terrain generator.

Your seven advisors let you know what to concentrate on next. They tell you when your sims need new hospitals or are gasping for water.

this doesn't go far enough and you can't initiate a deal yourself – you have to wait for a neighbour to come to you with a proposal which you either accept or reject.

FREE ADVICE
Keeping you on your toes is a set of seven advisors ranging from financial and transportation to 'aura' advisor. You can consult with these at any time to discover the areas you need to work on. Your citizens may be complaining of high taxes, lack of hospitals, poor funding for schools or mass transport. It's all a big balancing act – do you risk upsetting them

and have them move out, or do you spend money responding to their demands and keeping them happy?

Of course the problem with the ultimate city is what do you do with it once you've created it? This is where *SimCity* has always fallen down. There are five 'disasters' you can unleash on your city – including an attack from UFOs, fire and tornadoes, so you can sit back and watch it all go up in smoke. But this is always such a depressing end to a city you've slaved over for days or even weeks. *SimCity 3000* does a good job of staving off the

inevitable by bombarding you with petitions and having advisors keeping you informed, but you still reach that moment eventually. Each time you learn a little bit more and start off with grand ambitions of how you'll build the next Paris, but invariably you end up recreating Milton

Keynes in miniature. Or maybe that's just me.

If you haven't guessed by now, I love it. I've lost a week to *SimCity 3000* already; it's utterly absorbing and totally addictive.

The graphics are impressive – you can zoom right in and see every sim running about their daily business

This morning on the tube I was planning out whether I could create a road-free city served only by underground transport. Yesterday I had to talk myself out of recreating London and positioning the available landmarks in all the right places. I'm worried that I might start talking like Paul Presley soon, but I just can't help it.

SimCity 3000 doesn't offer any grand variations on what's gone before but then it doesn't have to. It would be nice to imagine a day when *SimCity* enables you to create cities like Las Vegas or Bangkok where bad behaviour as mayor might be profitable too – a sort of *SimCity* in the style of *Carmageddon*, although god only knows how it would work. Lowering the horizons a bit, it's

a shame there aren't more new building structures to emerge as time advances and that you can't initiate deals with your neighbours. Also, it would be nice if you could raise and lower taxes in different areas to give slums a bit of a tax boost. Most of all, I wish I could build a red light district. Oh, and a giant roundabout with a herd of concrete cows in the centre... **PCZ**

PCZVERDICT

⬆ **UPPERS** Incredible graphics • Subways and public transport are more significant to the overall gameplay • Recognisable city terrains mean you can recreate London

⬇ **DOWNERS** Not different enough from *SimCity 2000* • The end game gets a bit dull

92 Hellishly addictive. Kiss goodbye to sleep for a few weeks

Your country needs you. A military base settles in your town, further swelling the city coffers.
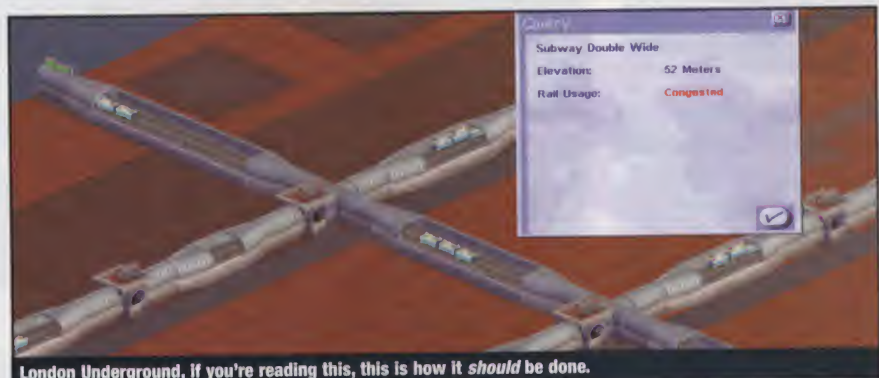
London Underground, if you're reading this, this is how it *should* be done.

LEAD ?

MYTH II: SOULBLIGHTER

⭐ £34.99 • GT Interactive • Out now

"When there's no more room in hell, the dead will walk the earth..." Yeah? Well *Paul Mallinson* prefers to keep an open mind

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P133 Memory 32Mb RAM **SUPPORTS** All major sound cards and 3D accelerator cards **WE SAY** Runs okay in software without acceleration, but you don't get quite the same impact

PC ZONE RECOMMENDED

ON THE CD

ALSO CONSIDER

TOTAL ANNIHILATION (Replay, £12.99) Still the best real-time strategy game around, but in a slightly different category to *Myth II*. If you're sick of hi-tech *C&C* clones, try out *Soulblighter*.

PCZ #70, 93%

MAGIC & MAYHEM (Virgin, £34.99) Less gritty, and more magic-oriented than *Myth II*, but different and fun.

PCZ #70, 92%

MYTH: THE FALLEN LORDS (Eidos, £39.99) Different tale, same concept. Still, not that bad. Play it before you play *Myth II*, obviously.

PCZ #58, 80%

Cuh. The undead are plaguing the land again – messing up my neatly-ploughed fields, dirtying my freshly laundered washing and tearing my peaceful, god-fearing townsfolk limb from limb. It's not a particularly pretty sight either, blood and entrails sloshing down the lush green hills.

But this is what's supposed to happen – after all, it is *Myth II: Soulblighter*, a fantasy strategy game with knights and demons fighting it out in the name of Jesus and the Devil. It's a ruse to provoke empathy for this senseless loss of life, and a shoehorn to spur you on to greater acts of digital conquest...

What am I talking about? Yes, *Myth II: Soulblighter* is a real-time strategy game. And a very gory one at that.

Zooming in doesn't seem to serve any particular purpose, apart from showing how good the anti-aliasing is.

FEAR & LOATHING IN CHICAGO

Soulblighter comes complete with a campaign editor called Fear & Loathing (which is, like, a rilly cool name, man). There are two programs in the suite: 'Fear' enables you to modify almost every aspect of the game, from weather to projectiles, while 'Loathing' is their fully enabled map-making tool. No doubt we'll see player-designed levels popping up on the Internet at some point in the near future. Us? We couldn't make head nor tail of it.

⊙ *In case you didn't know, Bungie, the creators of Myth II, are based in Chicago, Illinois. Which explains the header. Alright?*

Create your own maps with the 'Loathing' program.

GOT A GOOD ENGINE

On the face of it, *Myth II* seems extremely similar to *Myth: The Fallen Lords* (*PCZ #58, 80%*) – in terms of the engine, at least. And why not? We're talking 'state-of-the-art spinny-rotatey 3D engine' here, with superb physics effects that enable the blood and guts to fall realistically. So that's cool. Play the game for more than a few minutes then compare it to *The Fallen Lords*, however, and a number of fundamental changes come to light.

For starters, the much requested zoom in/out feature has now been implemented. And guess what. It doesn't make a blind bit of difference to the gameplay, except that it's now far easier to see around you because you can zoom further out than before. More positively, the point-and-click/drag-and-direct *C&C*-style control system is now as good as it could possibly be,

enabling formations to be easily managed (double-click on one unit to select all the nearby units of the same kind – neat), faced and sent into battle against the undead. A more varied range of player and non-player characters also adds to the mayhem.

EVIL NUTTER

Although the single-player scenario is still linear by design, the individual missions vary far more than they did in the previous game, and there are also two secret levels to discover, making 26 in total. Dulcet briefings once again set the scene, and the developers have even enlisted the talents of a top Japanese Animé studio to create the rather decent

cut-sequences. Once in though, the action is pretty relentless.

The first episode sees you attempting to rescue a town overrun by undead raiders. Dispatch these (not easy, as

> **66 If you liked *Myth I*, you'll love this. Graphically it's much better, and there's not much wrong with the gameplay 99**

exploding Wights plague your troops with their paralysing spells) and a proper story begins to open up. Subsequent victories tell of a massive undead army raised by an evil nutter called the Soulblighter, and how you're the poor sucker who's got the task of sorting him out.

After five or six levels things really begin to hot up. There are bridges to blow up, castles to rush, prisoners to spring, knights to protect and barons to assassinate. Control occasionally

There's much more to *Myth II* than highlighting your entire army and attacking one stray enemy unit.

An invisible dwarf sabotaging an enemy castle, yesterday.

switches from one group of characters to another, so that while one group works on one side of the enemy, another sneaks in behind to do them over. Some levels even open with rudimentary 'in-engine' cut-scenes showing the enemy massing before your first move. The feeling of involvement and progression in 'the bigger picture' is commendable.

TASK IN HAND

As with *The Fallen Lords*, *Soulblighter* is hard, even on the 'normal' skill setting. The handy tutorial helps, introducing you to new units and new 'special' attack commands (such as the archer's flaming arrow – useful for setting fire to things), but newcomers may find the going tough initially. *Myth* experts (like myself), on the other hand, should progress at a fairly satisfying rate, such is the addictive nature of the game. And after completing the single-player game there's a mix of multiplayer fun to had, whether it be over a network with your work mates or against Americans on Bungie's free website (**www.bungie.com**).

On the downside, there are still AI problems – the usual kind of thing such as units walking aimlessly into trees or shooting into middle space – but they rarely seem to get in the way of the task at hand.

IT'S HOT, BABY

But back to *Soulblighter*'s good points. You can't fault the graphics: rolling hills and cute little medieval villages are recreated in loving detail, with falling leaves and bouncing bunnies sprucing up the countryside, and puffing smoke and wandering villagers giving life to towns. Fog, rain and lightning effects not only look nice, but also affect how you play – especially when you try your first grenade attack in the middle of a thunderstorm. Water reflections are much better (and surprisingly realistic), and there's now far more variation in the make-up and elevation of the landscape. The much-lauded physics engine is also quite superb – limbs and blood falling realistically (obviously I've murdered enough people to corroborate that), and height advantages really counting in the heat of battle.

And hot it is. If you liked the original *Myth*, you'll love this.

Graphically, *Soulblighter* is much better, and there's not much wrong with the gameplay (so long as your skills aren't compromised by the sometimes twitchy AI). There's a fine single-player game to get your teeth into, and an easily workable multiplayer alternative to back it up. There's even a campaign editor which enables you to make your own missions. Add all these things together and you have to conclude that *Myth II: Soulblighter* is undoubtedly an excellent package. PCZ

The aim of this mission is to take out the fat bastard with the metal bouncers. Not easy.

Run, little one! Run with all your might!

When visibility drops below three feet you know you've well and truly had it.

When the interior missions begin, you realise that a whole new strategy has to be employed in order to succeed.

Rurik has been killed! You bastards!
Myth II's creators are obviously big *South Park* fans.

PCZVERDICT

⬆ **UPPERS** Good storytelling, great atmosphere • Exciting and challenging • Plenty of graphical treats • A laugh in multiplayer • Free campaign editor

⬇ **DOWNERS** Some AI problems • A couple of missions are too short

85
An enjoyable fantasy action game

A BRIDGE TOO FAR

There are some excitingly destructive moments in *Myth II*. Here's an impressive example, found quite early in the game

1 My army is being pursued by a hoard of undead demons, so it's time to find an escape route.

2 Ooh, look – a bridge. Best get across sharpish. Thankfully (ha, ha) my reinforcement dwarves have mined it.

3 Here they come! Have they any idea what they're getting themselves into? Heh, heh, heh...

4 Any second now... Any second now... The undead morons stumble into my trap and a dwarf lets loose a grenade.

5 Boom! That's the end of that lot. Any more for any more?

The game can run at resolutions of up to 1024x768. Detailed, innit?

WORMS ARMAGEDDON

⊙ £TBC • MicroProse • Out now

Nobody likes him. Everybody hates him. He's lurking in the darkness playing _Worms_. Pink and spineless: _Charlie Brooker_

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P100 **Memory** 32Mb RAM **WE SAY** P150, 32Mb RAM, and the better your graphics card, the higher the resolution you can play in

PC ZONE CLASSIC

Like the majority of her infuriatingly sensible sex, my girlfriend isn't into games. Nevertheless, every now and again she stumbles across one she likes… then plays it _so much_ I start to detest the sight and sound of it.

For some inexplicable reason, she once became helplessly enchanted with _ToeJam And Earl_ on the Megadrive, and would force me to play it with her, from start to finish, for days on end, wailing like a wounded dog whenever I tried to get up and go for a piss or something. _Mario Kart_ on the SNES and _GoldenEye_ on the N64 became similar obsessions – but she's _never_ grown to love a PC game.

Until _Worms Armageddon_

turned up, that is. Getting this review written has proven difficult because she just won't stop playing the damn thing. I've had to wait till she's asleep, and if I type too loud she'll probably get up and demand another go. It's like living with a drug addict or something.

OH MAGGOT, THEY KILLED KENNY

If you're not familiar with the _Worms_ phenomenon, it's a deceptively simple game in which two or more teams of cute cartoon maggots fire weapons at each other in an attempt to wipe out the opposing team. It's turn-based; that is, first you take a shot at one of your girlfriend's worms, then one of hers takes a shot at one of yours. You can't move or shoot back during the other player's go, and this is one of the things that makes the game so tense and compelling.

The other is the unpredictable

nature of the armoury you're given: bazooka shells which get buffeted by the wind, grenades which ricochet in unforeseen ways, and downright ridiculous weapons such as exploding old ladies and flying sheep. Murphy's Law comes to the fore time and time again during a round of _Worms_, with a fair proportion of the fatalities occurring by accident (hey – just like a real war).

To a sniffy ponce it might look like a 'little game', but it's a damn

just don't want to stop, and if they aren't around there's always single-player missions, CPU opponents or the Internet. You can say goodbye to your social life, basically.

GRUB A DUB DUB

What else? Well, if you've already got _Worms 2_ (_PCZ_ #58, 82%) you might want to 'try before you buy'. The addition of _WormNet_ (the online play system) is a big plus, but otherwise many of the changes in _Worms Armageddon_

> **"It's a damn sight more impressive than most of the blockbusters out there. In fact it's hard to convey just how intrinsically _satisfying_ it is to play – it's as moreish as popping your way through a huge sheet of bubble wrap"**

sight more impressive than most of the blockbusters out there. In fact it's hard to convey just how intrinsically _satisfying_ it is to play – it's as moreish as popping your way through a huge sheet of bubble wrap. Successfully scoring a direct hit at long range delivers a short jolt of pleasure on a par with that which accompanies a really good punchline. Playing against an eager companion, you'll find you

are cosmetic (it does look a lot nicer, mind). If you've never played a _Worms_ game before, or you've only tried the first one, you don't have anything to lose.

And before we go, a quick note about _Worms Armageddon_'s superb visuals: this is one of the coolest looking games ever. The design is ingenious, the animation dazzling. The worms are fantastic – full of character and humour – and should really be starring in

their own TV cartoon series. Team 17's graphics department deserve a gigantic sack of awards. Actually, make that two sacks. Each one twice the size of Mount Kilimanjaro. **PCZ**

ALSO CONSIDER

WORMS: THE FULL WORMAGE (MicroProse, £29.99) Retro budget _Worms_ compilation, featuring the original game and subsequent mission packs. Okay, but nowhere near as polished as…

PCZ #33, 84%

WORMS 2 (MicroProse, £29.99) Looking back, it seems we undermarked poor old _Worms 2_. Well, we're redressing the balance now, so quit whining, okay.

PCZ #58, 82%

PCZVERDICT

⬆ **UPPERS** Fearsomely addictive • Inherently satisfying action • Superb cartoon visuals

⬇ **DOWNERS** Occasional snatches of cheery racism

90 _Full Metal Jacket_ meets _Tom And Jerry_

HUGE TRACTS OF LAND

Here's one we made earlier.

One of the many things the game enables you to tinker with is the landscape itself – you can ask the computer to randomly generate one to your specifications, or pick up your mouse and design it yourself. If you're poncy enough to have a graphics tablet, so much the better; you can draw a forest of great big penises and then laugh yourself ill as the worms hop all over them. If you're that childish, that is.

Nightmare dreamscape or custom *Worms* level? Who can say? Who cares?

Saving Private Ryan, anyone?

Look, you can input funny names... Coo!

There are loads of action-gadgets to play with... like this ninja rope.
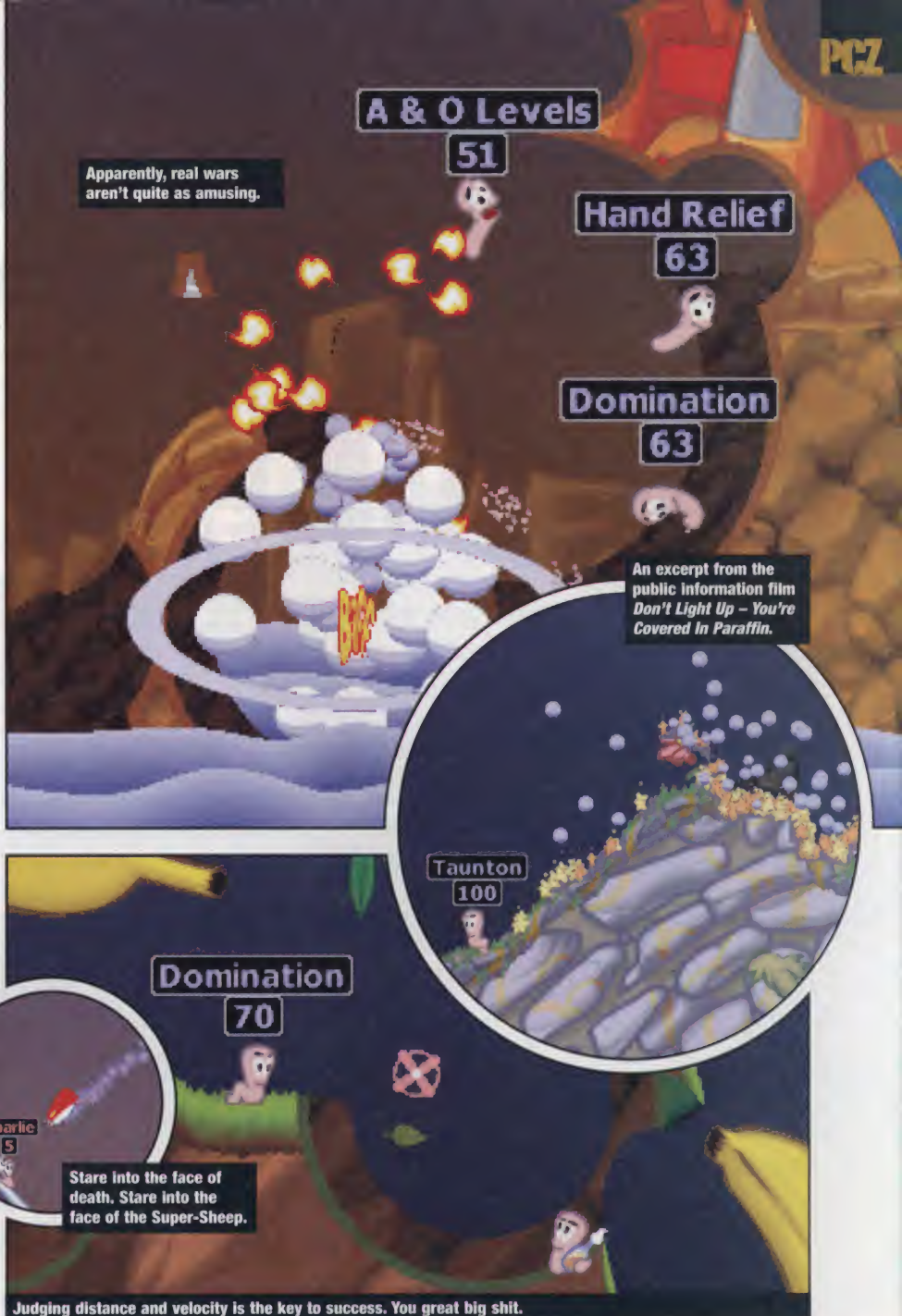
Apparently, real wars aren't quite as amusing.

An excerpt from the public information film *Don't Light Up – You're Covered in Paraffin*.

Stare into the face of death. Stare into the face of the Super-Sheep.

Judging distance and velocity is the key to success. You great big shit.

MIND YOUR LANGUAGE

Worms Armageddon enables you to customise your team in all kinds of inconsequential but amusing ways. You can choose a name for each worm, for example, leading to endless hilarity as Posh Spice lobs a grenade at Dale Winton and Big Balls unloads a shotgun into Wet Arse's face.

The worms natter continually throughout each round, and their standard chirpy English voices can be replaced by different languages and dialects. There are cockney wide boys, grim Yorkshiremen, US sports commentators, worms who speak in German, Dutch, French, and so on.

Fair enough. But a few of the speech banks on offer left us feeling a *little* uncomfortable. There's a Rasta who wails "Big mama!", "Where dat watermelon?" and "Lordy!" like a pop-eyed comedy negro from some nonchalantly racist '30s Hollywood comedy.

There's a Japanese worm who screams "Glenade!", a homosexual worm who simpers about handbags and mascara, and an Indian who speaks in fractured grammar, burbling "Goodness gracious me" and "Poppadom!" like a closing-time drunk haranguing the waiter in a small-town curry house.

Close your eyes and whoosh: it's 1974, and you're listening to one of those jaw-dropping sitcoms which dealt with the sensitive issue of racial intolerance by placing a white man in the leading role and reducing everyone else to the level of gurning half-wit stereotype.

Still, in the knowing '90s, can't we just look on this as a bit of cheeky non-politically correct fun? Maybe. But since the game is also designed to be played across the Internet, against people of all nations, it'd be interesting to see just how rib-tickling or otherwise the rest of the world finds it.

DELTA FORCE

⭐ £34.99 • NovaLogic • Out now

When it comes to handling large weapons, _Paul Presley_'s a natural. More accurately, he's a dab hand with a can opener

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 with MMX **Memory** 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** It'll chug a bit if you want to run at full res (800x600), even on a P266. 640x480 is fine though

ALSO CONSIDER

TOM CLANCY'S RAINBOW SIX (Take 2, £34.99) Deeper, far more involving and far more atmospheric. Even the multiplayer game is better. **(PCZ #69, 89%)**

SPEC OPS: RANGERS ASSAULT (Take 2, £34.99) Also better than _Delta Force_, but not quite as detailed as _Rainbow Six_. Not particularly lengthy either. **(PCZ #65, 88%)**

HALF-LIFE (Sierra, £39.99) Well it's got soldiers in it, hasn't it? **(PCZ #71, 95%)**

What is it with NovaLogic and their 'Voxel Space' games? Somebody please tell them: the Voxels don't work; they don't look any good. Why don't they get themselves a 3Dfx programmer like everybody else? It's almost the year 2000, for heaven's sake. They'd certainly sell more games.

I could harp on about the graphics in _Delta Force_, but there's no real point. If you're not already familiar with Voxel Space, all you need to know is that it's great for creating landscapes that stretch for miles into the distance and wonderful for running games on

➔ You never feel in command of an elite fighting force.

PCs that were bought from the second-hand pages of _Loot_, but it's useless for any kind of close-up work, as everything becomes so pixelated you might as well be using a 16-bit computer from the late '80s. Some of the enemy soldiers in _Delta Force_, when viewed through a sniper's scope, even bring to mind the Spectrum classic _Ant Attack_.

READY... AIM...

But that's not the point. Although we're hardly talking _Half-Life_ (PCZ #71, 95%) or _Rainbow Six_ (PCZ #69, 89%) here, you can live with the graphics for the most part (particularly if you shove the resolution up all the way to 800x600). No, _Delta Force_'s real problem is that at no time do you feel as though you're in command of an elite fighting force. Rather, you tend to feel like (John) Rambo – wading through the bodies of an entire army with just a machine gun at your hip.

The background to the game sets you up for a dizzying array of stealth and infiltration missions: rescue hostages, blow up SAM sites, escort diplomats through the jungle... It all sounds great. And then you start playing. And you soon realise that although the objectives for each mission change, the procedure for completing each one is practically the same: kill everything that moves. And you appear to be alone as you battle your way through. Each

mission throws a touch of support your way from secondary teams providing covering fire, but you just seem to wander your way through the waypoints as though you're out for a Sunday stroll. Now I'm no soldier, granted. I've never worn camouflage pants or got excited about large weaponry. But I can't help but think that most of these elite fighting forces tend to work in teams. There's no planning involved in _Delta Force_, and consequently no feeling of depth. Games like _Rainbow Six_ or _Spec Ops_ (PCZ #65, 88%), perhaps _Delta Force_'s closest rivals, really make you feel as though you're in charge of an elite unit, issuing orders, making plans, relying on team-mates and so on. _Delta Force_ simply feels half-hearted from start to finish.

...FIRE!!!

Having said all that, there are _some_ nice aspects. The online

With mounting horror, Geoffrey suddenly realised he'd called the air strike in to the wrong location.

The sniper mode is useful for precise targeting or just for watching things blow up in detail.

Needless carnage, yesterday.

> **"It just isn't detailed enough to appeal for long, either as a heavyweight sim or as an engaging arcade romp"**

game isn't bad (but not stunning). When things start getting hectic the confusion of war is nicely portrayed, and the sound effects are particularly good, especially as bullets smack into the ground.

But it just isn't detailed enough to appeal for long, either as a heavyweight sim or as an engaging arcade romp. You'd be better advised to wait for _Spec Ops 2_ or _Team Fortress II_. 📺

PCZ VERDICT

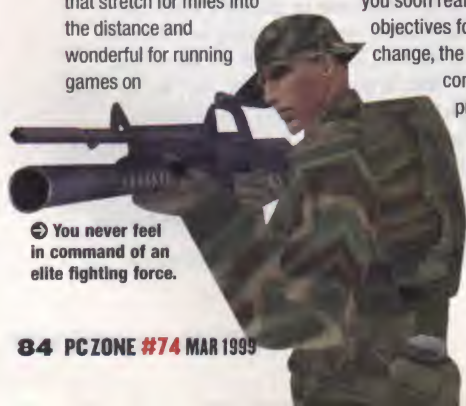🔼 **UPPERS** Good sense of visual distance • Weapon noises are impressive • Nice online play

🔽 **DOWNERS** No real sense of involvement • Not particularly detailed • Graphics vary between good and mediocre

66 Not exactly the SAS

Not all missions require subtle infiltration. Here, for example, you have to protect a presidential convoy.

From this distance circumcision takes years of training to perfect.

Wentworth: home of the best golf in Britain, apparently.

Sand in my hair, my eyes, and my bloody shoes.

The green, green grass of home.

Swinging for the pin.

THE GOLF PRO 2

⊙ £19.99 • Empire Interactive • Out now

The original *Golf Pro* was a *PC ZONE* Classic. *Craig Vaughan* shakes the mothballs from his Pringle jumper and plus fours to check out the latest offering

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM **Processor** P90 **Memory** 16Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** 3D card via Direct3D **SUPPORTS** Multiplay over Internet **WE SAY** It looks beautiful on a P200 with at least 32Mb

ALSO CONSIDER

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR GOLF (EA Sports, £34.99) The best PC golf simulation bar none. Hosts a superb 3D engine, a ton of customisable options and a variety of diverse control methods. *PCZ #69, 93%*

THE GOLF PRO (Empire Interactive, £39.99) Long-running competitor to the *PGA* series, which features excellent in-game tuition and sparkling graphics. Unfortunately it suffers from a weak putting interface. *PCZ #62, 90%*

LINKS LS (Eidos Interactive, £39.99) A stylish affair but bettered by both of its main rivals. A fun and easily accessible game that suffers from too many updates and too little innovation. *PCZ #43, 94%*

Tiger Woods might argue that you can't teach an old dog new tricks, but Empire Interactive obviously think differently, having dragged veteran golf legend Gary Player out of the nineteenth hole one more time. Quite what this geriatric pro would make of young upstart Tiger Woods is debatable, but the contrast between the two players is as evident in the games they endorse as it is in their individual styles of play.

Tiger, the dynamic newcomer, scored a massive hit with EA Sports' *Tiger Woods PGA Tour Golf* (*PCZ #69, 93%*). Essentially an upbeat recreation of the sport, it coupled sweater-wearing, Nike-capped players with a range of outrageous and innovative

options. However, while hip new players have attracted additional fans to the genre, they've also alienated traditionalists who still believe in the cloth-capped conservative approach of Gary Player and his ilk – whose golfing style is better represented in the original *Golf Pro* (*PCZ #62, 90%*).

> ❝ *The Golf Pro 2* is merely a disappointing course data disc that fails to deliver anything radically new ❞

THE SAME GAME – AGAIN

And so we come to *The Golf Pro 2*. The name suggests a sequel to see off EA's Tiger-endorsed product, and conjures up visions of inevitable enhancements: an option-laden, user-friendly front end; vastly improved graphics; a larger choice of diverse courses; a new control mechanism; and a huge field of challenging new opponents. But no. Unfortunately that's actually a comprehensive list of what's *missing* from this

game; *The Golf Pro 2* is merely a disappointing course data disc that fails to deliver anything radically new. What you do get for your money is a standalone, half-price, cut-down version of the excellent *The Golf Pro*.

You may recall that two courses were included with the original – the Hilton Head National and the St Mellion International. They're now conspicuous by their absence, and have been replaced by just one course, Wentworth. That's right, one course for 20 pounds. Thankfully, if you own the original you can make use of your old courses here – and you'll need to, because, gorgeous and engaging as it is, Wentworth won't keep you occupied for long.

The Golf Pro 2 shares the same strengths as the original. Highlights include superb course graphics, accurate terrain detail, informative and fun tuition by Gary Player, and the rewarding 'move the mouse to manipulate the swing' control method. As ever, Mouse Swing™ makes fairway play a cinch, but proves a complete bitch on the greens because it's not subtle enough for putting. New options (such as they are) include advanced

opponent AI, new camera angles and a huge tournament mode – all of which are surely 'patchable' enhancements?

Sadly, some of you will doubtless already have bought this game, believing it to be the true sequel that its name implies. If you already own *The Golf Pro*, there's not really enough here to warrant splashing out on this game. However, bargain hunters might want to take advantage of Dixons' generosity in bundling the original game with this 'sequel' for less than 30 quid. Providing you don't already own a copy of either game, we recommend you go for the twin package. PCZ

PCZ VERDICT

🔺 **UPPERS** It's a cheap, standalone version of an excellent golf game

🔻 **DOWNERS** It's not the true sequel that the title suggests • There's only one course • It's not value for money

70 Excellent to a point, but a bit half-baked

CLOSE COMBAT III: THE RUSSIAN FRONT

⭐ £39.99 • Microsoft • Out mid-February

Storm into Berlin, kick loads of German arse and save the world from Teutonic tyranny. "What, again?" asks *Phil Wand*

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P133 **Memory** 32Mb RAM **SUPPORTS** TCP/IP, IPX, modem and serial multiplayer **WE SAY** Doesn't look that processor-intensive, but it can get rather slow in places

A little Russian fry-up in Stalingrad

PC ZONE RECOMMENDED

When Westwood released *Red Alert* (*PCZ* #47, 94%) all those years ago, armed conflict seemed like a fun and groovy thing. Brightly coloured tanks and soldiers with accents more phoney than Antoine de Caunes maimed and killed each other for laughs. Nobody questioned their orders, and everyone was happy to leap suicidally in front of an enemy machine-gun at the click of a mouse.

Today, fashion dictates that *Close Combat III: The Russian Front* be filled with panic-stricken servicemen, blood-curdling shrieks, ruptured skulls, and bones poking through flesh. Land mines don't just go 'dink' and remove one of your blips from the map, they go "WAH*BOOOM!*" and are followed by muffled cries for an ambulance.

That's not to say that Microsoft's long-established strategy series has suddenly become obsessed with Spielbergian realism. It hasn't. It's always been that way. Those of you who are familiar with the two earlier *Close Combat* titles

> **"Each progression furnishes you with experience points which, as time goes on, aid your success in battle"**

will know them as true-to-life interpretations of *Command & Conquer*, mould-breaking real-time strategy games that won praise from wargamers who wanted to do away with turns but found Westwood's interpretations just a little bit anaesthetised. So there are no surprises when you step into your first scenario and hear beleaguered troops pleading to be allowed home.

PRELUDE TO WAR

Close Combat III is set on the Eastern Front in World War II and outlines four years of punishing conflict between the Ruskies and the Germans, from the 1941 invasion of the USSR through to the fall of Berlin. You get to play as either side, starting off with small-scale individual battles and then moving to operations, to campaigns, and finally on to the

Long gone are the tiled maps of old.

Organise your troops and support units before each battle.

Numerous German squads on their way to kill me.

Information panels can be flicked on and off and provide all manner of useful data.

"Oi! No!"
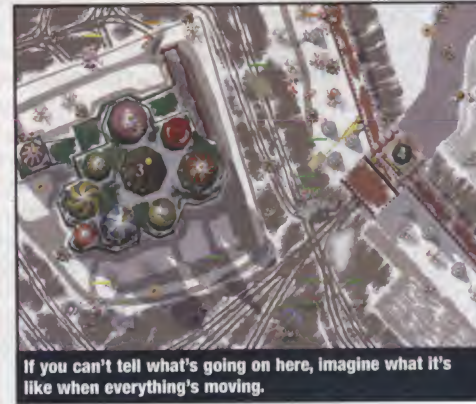
If you can't tell what's going on here, imagine what it's like when everything's moving.

Your chance to incinerate the Reichstag.

Close Combat suffers somewhat from indistinct graphics.

Seasonal maps and uniforms give the game added depth.

Big Kahuna – the Grand Campaign. The game also incorporates its own editor which enables you to redefine the various settings, parameters and objectives of existing scenarios, which should keep strategy buffs satisfied for the next 100 years.

It should be made clear at this juncture that those of you looking for a *Total Annihilation*-style blast should apply elsewhere. *Close Combat* action doesn't come anywhere near the hectic pace of Cavedog's game, and requires a liberal amount of thinking, rethinking, sneaking about, holding position and scurrying between trees. On the other hand, if surveying the territory, considering your options and then laying down some suppressing mortar fire while infantry dash out of a ditch to ambush an opponent sends you into raptures, then this is *just* the toy for you.

To spice things up a bit, developers Atomic Games have added a role-playing flavour where you are put in command of a special forces unit which moves from battle to battle. Each progression furnishes you with experience points which, as time goes on, aid your success in battle, while technological advancements enable you to add new, more effective weaponry.

ONCE MORE UNTO THE BREACH

The maps in this latest instalment are now much more diverse, three times bigger than before and based on aerial photographs. Every region includes highly detailed terrain features such as hills, dales, ditches and foliage, all of which play a vital part in your strategy. Aside from obvious line-of-sight and line-of-fire issues, a slope can hinder your tanks and cause your foot soldiers to exert themselves, leaving them all puffed out and unable to shoot straight by the time they've come to a halt.

The manual goes into some depth to explain how you should use the scenery and the 300 different squads, 100 different weapons, 60 soldier types and 80 vehicles to your advantage. Given that the enemy AI and its grasp of the situation at any moment on any map is nothing short of distressing, you need to use every trick in the book to gain the upper hand. You can zoom in and out to get a better idea of your surroundings, but the close-up views are rather blocky and thus aren't particularly useful.

Playing as the Russians, many of the early battles see your Red Army forces outnumbered, outclassed and slaughtered. Unfortunately this is considerably disheartening, and after three or four successive wipe-outs you seriously think about jacking it all in and grooming the dog instead.

On the next game, even your troops start giving up: they refuse orders; they start running backwards instead of forwards; they leap out of their tanks and high-tail it to a neighbouring village. Just as they take the initiative in the heat of battle, they flee if panicked by a lunatic (ie you) issuing orders for them to advance across an open field in full view of six enemy battalions.

Suddenly you feel as if you've let them all down, and resolve to do better next time. So you spend much longer digging into defensive positions and less time ordering troops into the middle of no man's land. You're very careful about keeping them in bunkers, in woods – anywhere that's out of harm's way. And then… *Pow!* – you realise that you're hooked.

THE END

Unlike the way Hollywood likes to tack soppy all-okay-in-the-end scenes on to the end of modern war epics, *Close Combat III* is keen to remind you, both in terms of grisly gameplay and through data in the manual, that more

than 25 million Russians died on the front. Combined with unsentimental action, realistic weaponry and historically accurate campaigns, the game not only makes you desperate for a truce, it also encourages you to reflect on the appalling waste of life during wartime. I mean, 25 *million*. That can't help but make you stop and think. **PCZ**

PCZVERDICT

⊕ UPPERS Makes you feel like a real general • Painstakingly realistic • Interface simplicity itself • Existing *Close Combat* fans will spooge

⊖ DOWNERS Inaccessible to most real-time strategy fans • Extremely difficult • Game theatre can feel a bit passé after *Red Alert* • Graphics below par • Crap tutorial

84 Real-time strategy at its most demanding

DO-IT-YOURSELF FLAME-THROWER

Without doubt, the flame-thrower is the most marvellous weapon in any game. While they tend to be incredibly dangerous, often missing the target entirely and roasting the operato, all adjacent units and local wildlife instead, there's nothing as satisfying as frying a bad guy with a whooshing streak of napalm derivative. Trouble is, you just can't buy the dang things *anywhere*. So here's how to make your own with the minimum of fuss

WHAT YOU NEED

1 set of bagpipes, 3 gallons of fairy liquid, 2 party packs of styrofoam cups, 1 packet of Swan Vestas, and some benzene
✪ Extinguish all cigarettes
✪ Add the styrofoam cups to the fairy liquid
✪ Stir in the benzene (tip: wear gloves or you'll get leukemia)
✪ Pour the mixture into bagpipes
✪ Hoist bagpipes and carry in the traditional manner
✪ Light match and hold in front of pipes
✪ Clench bagpipes to fire
Ensure you use your new flame-thrower near a suitable fire extinguisher – eg a lake

NB: It's just a joke, okay? Obviously we neither expect nor want anyone to actually try something so dangerous. To reiterate: joke. Got that? Good.

The maps can be zoomed out to such a silly distance that you can't see what's going on.

PRO PILOT '99

⭐ £34.99 • Sierra • Out now

As the civil flight sim resurgence continues,
Paul Presley **gets lost in the clouds**

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P133 **Memory** 32Mb RAM **SUPPORTS** 3Dfx cards, all flightsticks, rudders and throttle controls **WE SAY** A 3D card would seem to be a prerequisite, as well as a P233 at the very least

ALSO CONSIDER

FLIGHT SIM 98 (Microsoft, £34.99)
Perhaps the most popular flight sim in the world, despite *Flight Unlimited II* actually being a more enjoyable game to play. It scores over *Pro Pilot '99* through its global reach and open-ended architecture, meaning it can be enhanced to the nth degree through freely available and commercial add-ons. *PCZ #55, 94%*

FLIGHT UNLIMITED II (Eidos, £39.99) While *Flight Sim 98* covers the world and *Pro Pilot '99* covers a significant chunk of it, *FUII* (perhaps the gaming world's best acronym) is limited to the small area around San Francisco. In its favour, *FUII* is infinitely better-looking than either of the above, has a far more believable world taking place around you, and is easily the most enjoyable of the three to actually play. *PCZ #60, 84%*

I n the vile, treacherous, back-stabbing world of civil aviation flight sims, there are two camps. No, let's be clearer than that: there are two flight sims. It isn't exactly the most competitive of genres.

At one end you have Microsoft's *Flight Simulator 98* (née *95*, née *3.0*) – big, bold, brash, and covering the world in fairly basic detail. It's a veteran. It's seen the war and lived through it to tell its tale. At the other end there's *Flight Unlimited II* (née… well just you try and guess, eh?) – young, cocky, filled with flair, looks and style, making up for a lack of geography with an astonishing level of local knowledge and atmosphere.

WHERE'S THE DETAIL?

The best way to describe *Pro Pilot '99*, therefore, is to go for straight comparisons. It's better than Microsoft's effort in the areas of non-urban graphics, interface and ease of use. Creating flight plans, tracking navigational beacons and communicating with ATCs are all much better here. What it lacks is *Flight Sim*'s sense of authority and its expandability. Although Microsoft's graphics may be spartan to begin with, download a few scenery files from the Net and things can easily be transformed; with *Pro Pilot* you're stuck with what you've got. Some

> **To say the world feels empty is an understatement. Even Microsoft's title provides a fair amount of dynamic scenery to admire**

of the airport layouts are astonishingly bad, for example, comprised of little more than a runway and a tower stuck on top of the grass. No taxiways, no buildings, no structure at all.

While we're on the subject, a word about the scenery graphics.

The clouds have a really fluffy, believable texture to them.

"They used to think the world was flat, that's because they never had *Pro Pilot 99*…" says the press kit that we were provided with. Ha ha. Funny Americans. Unfortunately the urban areas of *Pro Pilot '99* do look flat – very flat. It's the same story as in every other civil flight sim – large cities are simply a generic flat texture map with a few notable 3D landmarks thrown on top. And it doesn't work, plain and simple.

This isn't

essentially *Pro Pilot*'s fault, as no one else seems to have solved this problem yet (at least not in the civil flight sim world. Military flight sims, on the other hand, never seem to suffer from this. Surely lessons can be learned?). But it does mean that the required 'real-world' atmosphere is never really created.

On the plus side, *Pro Pilot* does clouds exceptionally well – really fluffy, really packed. These are the finest clouds I've yet come across in a flight sim of any genre. It may sound a trivial point, but it really does add a lot to the experience. That said, *FUII* has far better overall weather effects.

UNLIMITED LIMITATIONS

In fact, compared to *Flight Unlimited II*, *Pro Pilot* really suffers. It can't hold a candle to *FUII*'s graphic quality. And although it boasts the whole of America and Western Europe instead of just San Francisco, it doesn't feel as real or as alive a world as Eidos's baby.

The radio communication is minimal to say the least, and not easily accessible from the flight screen. And to say the world feels empty is an understatement. Even Microsoft's title provides a fair amount of dynamic scenery to admire.

What Dynamix needed to do

You could take time to admire the scenery while you're in the air, but the graphics don't exactly warrant it.

Each cockpit is nicely presented, although there are no 3D options for free-viewing.

This is from the intro sequence. The actual airports are far less detailed.

was create a realistic world, not just a good flight model. Something that kept you interested, and gave you something different from the other two titles rather than more of the same. What they've done instead is to create a middle ground that no one really needs to visit. There's a lot of emphasis on the training side of the game and, to be fair, elements such as the on-screen handbooks and checklists and the tutorial videos provide a lot of information that's easy to grasp for novices.

But the same can be said of the rival software, and there's just so much more to recommend over there. PCZ

PCZVERDICT

🔺 **UPPERS** Accessible • Non-urban graphics are good • Exceptional clouds

🔻 **DOWNERS** Cities still look drab and unreal • Empty-feeling world • No long-term appeal

----

70 Flight limited

Most cities are represented with one or two famous landmarks, but little else.

"FLY TEN AUTHENTICALLY MODELLED FIGHTERS AND BOMBERS?"

"CHECK!"

"LANCASTER, SPITFIRE, TYPHOON, MOSQUITO?"

"CHECK!"

"FOCKE WULF FW-190, ME-262, JU-88?"

"CHECK!"

"B-17G FLYING FORTRESS, P-51 MUSTANG, P-38J LIGHTNING?"

"CHECK!"

Allied bombers kick ET's ass.

Protect the moored ship and save the base.

Pay back time! Your bomber sets off fully loaded.

Stewart's not here because he's got diarrhoea.

This game needs tee pee for its bum hole.

The 'fog of war' parts its petals to reveal a raging sea battle.

"We're under attack!" cry the soldiers. "What do you want *us* to do about it?!" reply the generals.

INCOMING: SUBVERSION

⊕ £19.99 • Instant Access • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P133 Memory 16Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** 3D card and a copy of the original game **WE SAY** Try a P166 with 32Mb, and a 3D card

PC ZONE CLASSIC We're suckers for simplicity, and there was nothing quite as straightforward as the original *Incoming* (*PCZ* #63, 90%). One of the first PC games to require a 3D card, it combined outstanding Technicolor visuals with a return to the days of pure arcade shoot 'em up action. Up, down, left, right, and fire: a game you could control from the joystick without engaging too much of the grey matter.

It was clearly a labour of love for Rage, and the fact that they've endorsed Instant Access' mission disc speaks volumes for the quality of this title. The plot's totally redundant and plays second fiddle to 48 new levels of adrenaline-inducing destruction and mayhem. As with the original (which you'll need to play this update), you get to control an army of static

and free-roaming land, sea and air-based combat vehicles, each of which displays subtly different characteristics – from the manic and almost uncontrollable anti-aircraft guns to the sedate and lumbering fighter bombers.

While there's some superficial variety in the mission briefs, they boil down to a good excuse to exercise your trigger finger in what is essentially an all-out blasting frenzy. There are a few subtle and welcome innovations, the best of which is that allied forces assist you by joining the fray at critical points in the action, which is just as well because the enemy AI has been ramped to the max. To begin with the opposition craft gleefully meander into your sights with a lemming-like anticipation of their doom. But within a very short space of time the aircraft, in particular, deftly twist and dodge your attacks, adding tremendously to the challenge. It's incredibly addictive, and earning new craft while accessing later levels means it's rewarding too – a superb update of a genuine classic.

Craig Vaughan

PCZVERDICT 90%

BUNGHOLE IN ONE

⊕ £19.99 • GT Interactive
• Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P133 Memory 16Mb RAM **SUPPORTS** All major sound cards **WE SAY** Does alright on this minimum spec

A Beavis & Butt-Head crazy golf computer game? Mmm, it seems someone's had their thinking cap on at MTV Interactive. At first glance, things don't turn out as bad as expected, and *Bunghole In One* seems an unusual diversion for Beavis & Butt-Head fans in need of a fix. After some rigorous playtesting though, you soon discover that this game has little longevity. Putting the ball is easy enough – simply click on it and drag to adjust speed and direction. Applying this simple action to the 18 courses on offer is another thing entirely – most of them require more luck than judgement to complete on (never mind under) par, and after a short period of time the whole thing becomes incredibly frustrating. The speech is great for a while, but hearing "I just cut the cheese" for the fiftieth time does begin to grate. Even devoted Beavis & Butt-Head fans (like myself) will find little here to satisfy them.

Paul Mallinson

PCZVERDICT 49%

RIVAL REALMS

⊕ £34.99 • Digital Integration
• Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P90 Memory 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** You won't need any more than that

What's this? Yet another half-baked *Age Of Empires* rip-off? Well... Actually... Yes.

Before diving into the action you have to decide whether you want to play as a human, an elf or a greenskin (I prefer orange myself), before embarking on a 20-mission campaign to conquer the titular Realms.

Fourteen different units including archers, soldiers, warships and flying machines make up your species' ranks, and each unit can improve their strength, accuracy and armour ratings by killing armies and mythical creatures encountered on the way. Any characters still alive at the end of a mission can even be saved and used later.

Aside from the rather unimaginative graphics and schizophrenic AI, everything else in *Rival Realms* seems to be in place. The interface is crisp, units can be selected as individuals or groups, and the *SimCity*-style building/resource section is straightforward, if a little simplistic. Hardly vintage gaming, but it might keep you going for a few nights.

Keith Pullin

PCZVERDICT 70%

Don't bother with *Eliminator* – there are far better games out there.

ELIMINATOR
✪ £39.99 • Psygnosis • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 **Memory** 32Mb RAM **SUPPORTS** Most 3D and sound cards **WE SAY** A 3D card is essential because it looks poor in software

Psygnosis' first PC title of 1999 turns out to be this little-known shoot 'em up, *Eliminator*, and by golly it's… erm… a bit shit. It's similar in some ways to Ocean's *Tunnel B1* (*PCZ* #48, 73%) and Acclaim's classic, *Forsaken* (*PCZ* #63, 94%), in that you zoom around narrow corridors, fighting

your way through wave upon wave of robotic monstrosities, picking up power-ups (which improve weaponry and top up your health) and taking on the obligatory end-of-level guardians. There are traps galore, doors to unlock and secret weapons to bolt on as you plough your way through to the end of the game.

Unfortunately, *Eliminator* has none of the finesse of either *Tunnel B1* or *Forsaken* and is a failure in almost every department. Graphically it does nothing new, musically it's bland, and gameplay-wise you're bound to tire of it after just a few hours' play. All in all, the whole thing looks like a poor PlayStation conversion. Avoid.

Paul Mallinson

The thing to do if you buy *Eliminator*: set fire to it.

PCZVERDICT 30%

Western Front: a big improvement on *Eastern Front*.

Turn-based wargame fans won't be disappointed.

WESTERN FRONT
✪ £34.99 • Talonsoft • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P90 **Memory** 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** More memory speeds up the number crunching

PC ZONE RECOMMENDED

Western Front boasts a battalion of improvements over the first game in the series, *Eastern Front* (*PCZ* #58, 84%). It gives you the option of early/late French, British, US, Italian, Greek, Norwegian, Polish, Yugoslavian and Dutch forces on virtually any type of terrain, ranging from desert to wooded mountains. Covering 1939 to the end of WWII, it includes the battles and historical campaigns which took place in western Europe, Italy and Africa.

New features include enhanced terrain graphics – the level changes have finally been smoothed out – and a linked campaign mode with random scenarios. The new 'opportunity fire dialogue' enables you to tell your troops the range to fire at various targets, which is excellent for ambushes. There are various multiplayer options, plus play by email, and you can create scenarios from scratch using the editor.

All in all, it's a visual feast for turn-based wargamers, with in-depth gameplay and lots of variety. Roll on *Pacific Front*…

Andrew Wright

PCZVERDICT 87%
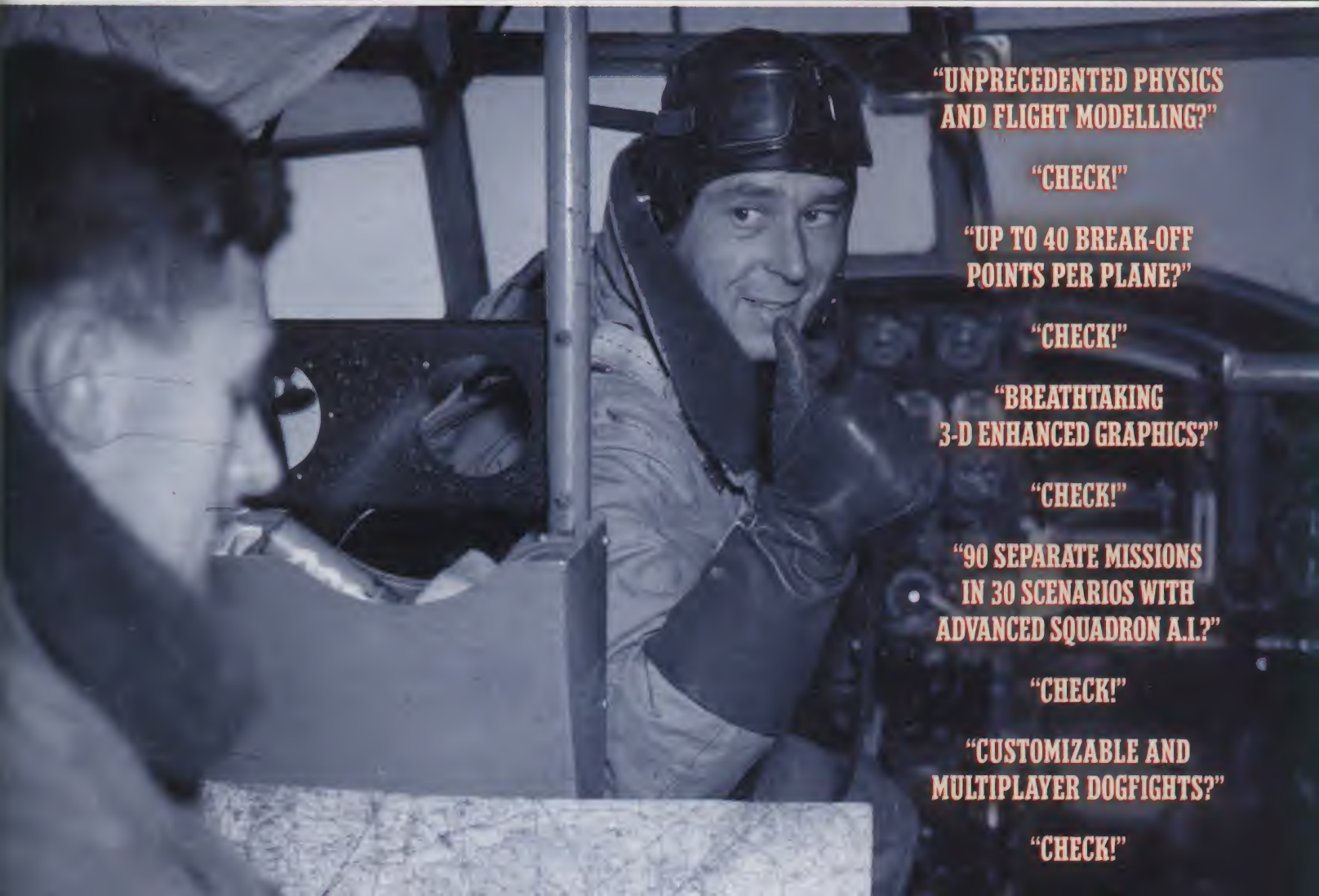
"UNPRECEDENTED PHYSICS AND FLIGHT MODELLING?"

"CHECK!"

"UP TO 40 BREAK-OFF POINTS PER PLANE?"

"CHECK!"

"BREATHTAKING 3-D ENHANCED GRAPHICS?"

"CHECK!"

"90 SEPARATE MISSIONS IN 30 SCENARIOS WITH ADVANCED SQUADRON A.I.?"

"CHECK!"

"CUSTOMIZABLE AND MULTIPLAYER DOGFIGHTS?"

"CHECK!"

A beautiful night in India to go out killing bad guys.

Damn, where did Tony Blair go?

Baz Nobble scores for the Gladiators. The crowd go wild.

Flashing lights and colours in your head signals 'kick off'.

Oh my God, they killed Bambi!

Animal sex features heavily, with rabbits going at it like knives.

Despite its cartoony style, *NFK* carries a 15 certificate.

RAINBOW SIX: EAGLE WATCH

⭐ £14.99 • Take 2 Interactive • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166MMX **Memory** 16Mb RAM **SUPPORTED** Hardware acceleration through Direct3D **WE SAY** 32Mb RAM and a 3D card are highly recommended

PC ZONE RECOMMENDED Given the current trends in the gaming world, you'd be forgiven for thinking that this *Rainbow Six* (*PCZ* #69, 89%) add-on pack was a bird-hunting conversion of a strategic action game. In fact, there are five new missions for you to explore, eradicating terrorist threats in beautifully rendered real-life locations such as the Taj Mahal and the Forbidden City. Because of the recognisable environments and the fact that your actions affect world politics, whether it's the peace process in Northern Ireland or the human rights progress in China, the levels seem to take on a whole new dimension.

The AI has been improved, so the terrorists will surrender if wounded and your men appear to have a little more initiative. On the other hand, your team still has a tendency to get stuck and face the wrong direction, while the enemy remains oblivious to gunfire until they've spotted you or been hit. There are also three new weapons and new multiplayer scenarios, where you *finally* get to fight against each other.

Five missions may not seem like much considering their linear nature, but they remain as replayable as those in the original. The graphics are noticeably better and the animation smoother. There are definitely some missed opportunities though, especially the lack of stealth missions, which provided the more demanding and involving aspects of the original game. The sense of danger and atmosphere really fades when compared to a game such as *Thief: The Dark Project*, (*PCZ* #72, 90%), which is a shame as it draws attention away from some of the innovations *Rainbow Six* introduced. And if our objective is safeguarding world peace and democracy, why are there no politicians for us to kill in the Houses of Parliament level?

Mark Hill

PCZVERDICT   **86%**

SAVAGE ARENA

⭐ £34.99 • Rage • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 **Memory** 16Mb RAM **SUPPORTS** Pretty much every sound card under the sun **ALSO REQUIRES** 3D card **WE SAY** It runs fine with these specs

The game formally known as *Deadball Zone* (on the PlayStation) finally makes it to the PC under the name *Savage Arena*. This futuristic sports game – a cross between *Speedball* (ancient Amiga sports game) and *British Bulldog* (ancient schoolyard fighting game) – is a graphically flash variant of netball, but with lashings of needless violence and light trails to spice things up a bit.

Overall, it's not a bad effort once you've got the hang of the numerous button combinations and start scoring, but there's a 'generic' feel about the whole game that fails to generate the kind of 'just one more go' enthusiasm it needs to make it worth recommending. Despite the responsive gameplay, play options and (rather sparse) management features, *Savage Arena*'s faceless players (Gimball Tapeworm and Benny The Mad anyone?) and lacklustre atmosphere ultimately result in a rather average gaming experience.

Paul Mallinson

PCZVERDICT   **50%**

NFK

⭐ £19.99 • GT One Stop • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 **Memory** 16Mb RAM **SUPPORTS** All major 3D cards through to Direct3D **WE SAY** Get a 3D card, tight arse

'NFK' is short for *Natural Fawn Killers*, if you hadn't guessed. "Born free, shot dead", as the 'hilarious' literature boasts. Yet another in the recent flurry of hunting titles, *NFK* takes a refreshingly unique approach. Rather than endlessly squatting in a thicket waiting for an unfortunate elk to wander into view, you can simply have the bastard with a chaingun. It doesn't shirk on the claret either, the cartoony style belying the incongruously gruesome reality. Heads fly off, limbs are severed, and blood gushes freely as dumb animals die in pain.

Firmly entrenched in the realms of noveltyware, it would be easy to dismiss *NFK* as the gaming equivalent of Joe Pesci's Christmas album: hilarious in theory but ultimately grating. However, the gameplay is actually quite finely balanced. With each level played against the clock, it can be a close-run thing, with time running out as you search desperately for a final kill with which to fill your vat of blood. You soon get sucked in and find yourself cursing an innocent fawn on the basis that it didn't die immediately, preferring to scamper off with jets of blood gushing from its wound. And if you can't think of any swear words, the game features a couple of its own, albeit bleeped out lest they cause offence (unlike the merciless slaughter of wildlife).

Unusually, *NFK* is actually an improvement on the games that it seeks to spoof, proving more playable than either *Deer Hunter* (*PCZ* #68, 27%) or the woeful *3D Hunting: Grizzly* (*PCZ* #72, 36%). It even throws some dinosaurs into the mix. However, it's still hard to envisage anyone paying money for it: this is the sort of thing shareware was invented for.

Steve Hill

PCZVERDICT   **45%**

QUAKE II: EXTREMITIES

⭐ £14.99 • Activision • Out now

Kosher and iD-authorised, this is a suite of desirable *Quake II* add-ons divided into three sections: mods, maps and skins. The latter two are just fillers, it's the mods you're paying for. There are team play classics like Capture The Flag and the quite nice Jail Break (when you die you end up in jail and your team mates have to try to bust you out). Then there are duelling packs like the amusing Rail-Arena (railguns only) and the popular Rocket Arena 2. But by far the star add-on is the very essential EraserBot, which pits you against some far-too-clever computer deathmatch players. They hog weapons. They snipe. They rarely miss. And they can even 'rag on you', except, of course, it's in American ("You suck!" "You blow!" etc).

A booklet would've been handy, since most mods have a wealth of configurable items. All in all, if you play Internet *Quake II* you'll probably have downloaded the fashionable accessories already. Worthwhile only if you're looking for a new thrill or your phone bill can't take it anymore.

David McCandless

PCZVERDICT 75%

Install any of these, turn them up loud and speak to someone on the phone – they'll think there's some kind of horrible porn film on in the background.

EraserBots: very hard deathmatch opponents for you and some pals – if you still have any.

BUDGET ZONE

You couldn't exactly call Activision's new range of classic re-releases 'budget' titles, but in the great scheme of things they're definitely worth a butcher's

⊙ **MAN WITH AN EYE FOR A BARGAIN** Jeremy Wells

JEDI KNIGHT / MYSTERIES OF THE SITH

⊙ £29.99 • Activision/LucasArts • Out now

⊙ "...And we're going to be known as New Romantics."

If you haven't yet played *Jedi Knight* or the equally impressive *Mysteries Of The Sith* mission pack that followed it, you're in for a treat.

A *Tomb Raider*-style third-person view comes in handy when leaping from platform to narrow ledge and waving your lightsaber.

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P75 **Memory** 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** 3D accelerator card recommended

PC ZONE CLASSIC Although not as technically impressive as *Quake II* (*PCZ* #59, 97%), the sequel to the original *Doom*-killer that was *Dark Forces* (*PCZ* #24, 95%) was light years ahead in terms of storyline and plot development.

Assuming the role of Jedi knight in the making Kyle Katarn, you must battle with stormtroopers and various Mos Isley cantina denizens, AT-ATs and evil Jedi warriors over varying terrain, which ranges from collapsing star cruisers to huge maze-like aqueducts.

Although the levels are quite sparsely populated, they're extremely well-designed, and you have to excel with your blaster and lightsaber and concentrate on developing your Force powers to progress through each level with enough energy to make it to the end. And those who can't face playing another *Quake* clone will be pleased to hear that there's also a *Tomb Raider*-style third-person view that comes in handy when leaping from platform to narrow ledge and waving your lightsaber.

LucasArts obviously listened to the minor criticisms that were levelled at *Jedi Knight*, because the *Mysteries Of The Sith* mission pack that was released a few months later is better still. The animation is tighter, the weapons have more punch and the levels are detailed and densely populated. Where else can you run around a 'living' city with a lightsaber and meet a giant rabbit?

It may not be in the same league as the more recent *Half-Life* (*PCZ* #71, 95), but at this price this double pack is a must-have for *Star Wars* fans with a penchant for top-quality first-person shoot 'em ups.

PCZVERDICT 90%
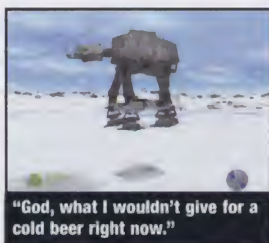
"God, what I wouldn't give for a cold beer right now."

It may look the mutt's nuts, but *Shadows* lacks the depth and long-term appeal of *TIE Fighter*.

STAR WARS: SHADOWS OF THE EMPIRE

✪ £14.99 • Activision/Classic LucasArts • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P133 Memory 16Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** 3D accelerator card

This hardware-only release might not be in the same league as the excellent *X-Wing* (*PCZ* #2, 88%) or *TIE Fighter* (*PCZ* #18, 94%), but that's not to say that the game should be ignored.

The graphics, music and sound effects are so buffed it's almost like being there, and when the music kicks in it's almost impossible for any *Star Wars* fan to stop the hairs on the back of their neck from rising. Those used to the freedom and attention to detail found in *X-Wing Vs TIE Fighter* (*PCZ* #52, 89%) might find the game lacking in the brains department; suffice to say that *Shadows Of The Empire* is essentially just another arcade-style shoot 'em up, albeit a very pretty and polished one.

If you're *Star Wars* mad and have to own everything to do with Han, Luke, Chewy and co, you'll probably be impressed enough with *Shadows*, but if you crave the depth of the excellent *TIE Fighter* you'll probably be left wanting more. One for your little brother, it's more like *Rebel Assault* (*PCZ* #11, 93%) than *Jedi Knight* (*PCZ* #55, 94%).

PCZVERDICT 72%

Purists like to maintain that *Monkey Island 3* is inferior to the first two games in the series. Which is utter crap.
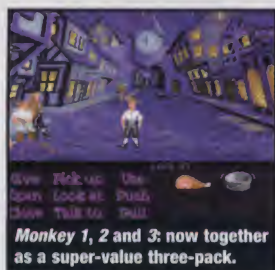
Monkey 1, 2 and *3*: now together as a super-value three-pack.
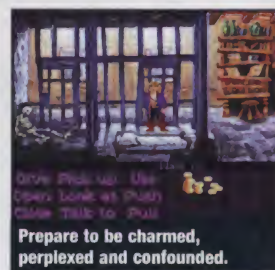
Prepare to be charmed, perplexed and confounded.

THE MONKEY ISLAND ADVENTURE PACK

✪ £39.99 • Activision/Classic LucasArts • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P133 Memory 32Mb **Note** Specs for *Monkey 3* only

PC ZONE CLASSIC Although the first two games in this multi-pack are looking decidedly long in the tooth, they are both classic games in their own right. In terms of plot development, storyline, characterisation and game design they are in many ways yet to be bettered. If you can ignore the dated VGA graphics (and once you start playing you become so absorbed that you will), you soon discover why developers LucasArts are so revered when it comes to adventure games.

The Curse Of Monkey Island (*PCZ* #58, 92%) is the third and most recent game of the series, and successfully marries all the humour, plot twists and puzzles of the first two games with lush hi-res graphics and animation. Purists maintain that in bringing Guy Threepwood and co up to date the series lost much of its charm and appeal, but any true fan of the *Monkey Island* adventures would argue that to be absolute nonsense.

Although *Monkey 3* is also available separately at a knock-down price, if you don't already own *Monkey 1* and *2* you'd be a fool not to get this super-value three-pack. Then book at least three weeks off work and prepare to be charmed, perplexed and confounded in the nicest possible way.

PCZVERDICT 90%

"Come an' gittit, Marshall! The boys are waitin'!"

An influence on *Half-Life*?

OUTLAWS

✪ £9.99 • Activision/Classic LucasArts • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P100 Memory 16Mb RAM **RECOMMENDED** 3D card

PC ZONE RECOMMENDED It's a shame that *Outlaws* was released during the period that the whole world was going *Quake* (*PCZ* #43, 96%) crazy, because it didn't really get the credit it deserved.

Although it looks decidedly dated compared to the latest breed of first-person shoot 'em ups, it's clean enough when running in hi-res with the help of a 3D card, and it's surprising how well the revamped *Dark Forces* (*PCZ* #24, 95%) game engine stands up some three years down the line. The music and sound effects deserve a mention too. As you stroll down the dusty street your foes actually jibe and taunt you, adding to the atmosphere immensely – something which no other first-person shooter has so far picked up on.

In terms of gameplay there are few surprises, although the facility to pick out your target with a telescopic sight, and the fact that you really have to use the cover and choose your weapons carefully to get through a level, mean that you have to think before you move and shoot. One can presume that the developers of the excellent *Half-Life* (*PCZ* #71, 95%) were not immune to *Outlaws*' charms.

It's quite difficult to recommend a game that's clearly so dated when there are so many more recent and excellent first-person games available, but at this price *Outlaws* is definitely worth considering.

PCZVERDICT 80%

C&C addicts may find *Star Wars Supremacy* a bit lame.
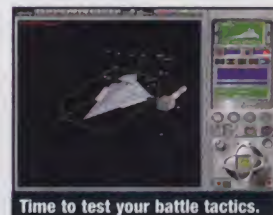
Time to test your battle tactics.

The view from the Shuttle. Pretty isn't it?

STAR WARS SUPREMACY

✪ £29.99 • Activision/Classic LucasArts • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P90 Memory 16Mb RAM

While LucasArts make us wait for *Force Commander*, the *Star Wars* strategy game that everyone wants, they've cunningly re-released their rather specialist strategy game set within the *Star Wars* universe.

Be warned: *Star Wars Supremacy* is nothing like the C&C-meets-Luke-and-Leia experience that every gamer is craving, but a rather complex strategy game of tactical warfare and exploration. More akin to *Masters Of Orion* (*PCZ* #11, 72%) than to *Command & Conquer* (*PCZ* #28, 95%), it's a reasonably well-presented affair that includes many of the characters and units from the last three films. The pull of sending Luke off on a recce mission and Han Solo to destroy an Imperial base may be too strong for some fans to resist, but many will find the format a little on the dull/formulaic side.

It's not that *Supremacy* is a bad game, just that it's not a particularly good one, and there are better examples of the genre, such as *Masters Of Orion*, available at a similar price.

PCZVERDICT 65%

BLOOD II: THE CHOSEN

HALF-LIFE

JEDI KNIGHT/MYSTERIES OF THE SITH

KLINGON: HONOUR GUARD

Take six angry men, stick them in a
pub and ply them with alcohol and
cheesy nachos. Then ask them
which is the best 3D shooter ever
made. Things could get messy.
Taking notes: *Richie Shoemaker*

PCZSUPERTEST
FIRST-PERSON

⊕ **PHOTOGRAPHY** Phil Ward

QUAKE II

SHOGO: MOBILE ARMOUR DIVISION

SIN

UNREAL

U s PC owners are a lucky bunch. We may be a grand down on the unwashed mass of console owners, but that's the price you pay for a piece of kit that runs some of the best games in the world. While Nintendo *Mario*-nettes wax lyrical about their one and only shooter, *GoldenEye*, and PlayStation pikeys wait for their version of *Quake II*, PC owners can reel off a whole list of titles that in most respects puts them all to shame: *SiN*, *Unreal*, *Quake II* to name just a few.

However, to form a cohesive argument with which to batter their juvenile faces, we must decide which game is the best. A year ago it was clearly *Quake II*, but since then it seems we've been swamped by clones, each one boasting a slew of new features. Working out which one surpasses all the others isn't as easy as you'd think, and trying to →

SHOOT 'EM UPS

⬆ L to R: David McCandless reviewed *Jedi Knight* (*PCZ* #55, 94%) and *Quake II* (*PCZ* #59, 97%) ✪ Charlie Brooker reviewed *Unreal* (*PCZ* #65, 93%) ✪ Paul Mallinson reviewed *Jedi Knight: Mysteries Of The Sith* (*PCZ* #62, 95%) ✪ Richie Shoemaker reviewed *Shogo: Mobile Armour Division* (*PCZ* #71 92%) and *Blood II* (*PCZ* #72, 88%) ✪ Chris Anderson reviewed *Chasm: The Rift* (*PCZ* #57, 65%), but that was crap, so we haven't included it here ✪ Steve Hill reviewed *Klingon: Honour Guard* (*PCZ* #68, 94%), *SiN* (*PCZ* #70, 91%) and *Half-Life* (*PCZ* #71, 95%).

come up with the runners-up is an even worse nightmare. But we did it. Friendships became strained, fists flew, blood flowed (as did the beer). We could have argued all night. In actual fact, we did. Read on…

BLOOD II: THE CHOSEN

Richie: After playing *Blood* (*PCZ* #53, 84%) so much I was really looking forward to the sequel, but after *Half-Life* it does seem somewhat basic.

Charlie: *Blood II* didn't really appeal to me, but then I didn't like the first *Blood*. *Half-Life* slowly builds up the tension, and the horror element comes out quite naturally, but within the first three seconds of *Blood II* there are guts and limbs flying about everywhere.

Macca: *Blood* had some nice ideas in it. The weapons were good. It was a bit *Duke Nukem* (*PCZ* #40, 93%) and it had those really brilliant monks. And you could set fire to things, which was always nice.

Richie: The fact that you've got

four characters to choose from and over 20 weapons lends the game massive scope. But it could've been a lot better. They should've kept the monks.

Macca: It's going to be better because it's got a way superior engine. But is the gameplay better underneath? I don't think so.

Macca: The characterisation seemed very unrealistic. Compared to *Half-Life*, which is inevitable, the animations – the way people die – is very *Shogo* (*PCZ* #71, 92%).

Chris: But *Shogo*'s quite colourful; *Blood II*'s just a bit… crappy.

Mallo: What I liked in particular was they way they used the engine to direct the cut-scenes.

Macca: Yeah, but it was so badly directed.

Steve: It was skid. It was like *You've Been Framed*.

Chris: Even though *Blood II* and *Shogo* share the same graphics engine, *Shogo* was much better graphically.

Richie: I wouldn't go that far, but it works better for *Shogo*

of the Animé style – it really works on that engine. The models are skinnier, but in *Blood II* the characters are a little *too* matchsticky. In *Unreal* (*PCZ* #65, 93%) the characters go the other way – they're far too beefy.

Mallo: What I found in *Blood II* was that it wasn't that scary. Not as scary as something like *Half-Life* or *Quake II*. I thought it was meant to be a horror game. Having said that, the weapons are cool. I like the dual weapons.

Macca: Yeah, but you can double up almost everything. It gets bloody ridiculous.

Richie: But you can drop one of them if you only want to carry the one pistol.

Macca: Well maybe I don't want to drop one of them.

Richie: Well, then maybe you're

> **"Within the first three seconds there are guts and limbs flying about everywhere"**
>
> CHARLIE ON *BLOOD II: THE CHOSEN*

being bloody ridiculous.

Chris: I couldn't really get into it. It didn't grab me after the first couple of levels.

Richie: It does take a while, but it picks up pace later on. That demo they released was awful though – they picked two of the worst levels.

HALF-LIFE

Mallo: Go on, Macca, you've been spooging about *Half-Life* for the past two months.

Macca: Because it rocks. It's f**king brilliant. It's the best game I've played for years. It's how games used to be. I was doing some sections over and over again because it's just *so* different.

Mallo: That's hypocritical. How can it be different if it's how games used to be?

Macca: What I'm saying is that if you've played a 3D shooter, you can play through them and the challenges that present themselves are all predictable.

Blood II: a great 3D engine, used to better effect in *Shogo*.

With *Half-Life* you haven't got a clue what's going to happen next – like the first time you played *Doom* (*PCZ* #13, 96%). Every few metres something amazing happens. The whole thing is a series of challenges that keep on developing. It's brilliant.

Steve: *Half-Life* has that atmosphere that makes it scary. The intelligence of the game and scripting all add up to make it frightening. You feel like it's going to rape you.

Charlie: And the weapons are pretty cool. I like the crowbar. I like the fact that you can kill people very quickly with a blunt instrument.

Mallo: The enemies are very inventive in the way they try to kill you. They work together, throw grenades…

Macca: It all works in tandem with the storyline. It's a real-world setting, which is always brilliant, looks unique, and the storyline pushes you forward. You are genuinely interested in what goes on around you. You can arbitrarily

kill the scientists, but in the end you don't want to because they're your friends.

Steve: In your case, your *only* friends.

Chris: I remember when *Half-Life* first came into the office. Everyone was stunned just by the intro. It has that kind of involvement, where even spectators become interested. It's a cinematic experience.

Mallo: That sequence where the machinery starts going up and then it all goes black…

Macca: Oooh, were you scared,

Mallo? Did you cry?

Mallo: You are forced into certain situations that make you explore areas you wouldn't normally look at. You're thrown into new situations all the time. It scares the life out of you.

Charlie: *Half-Life* is the best game I've ever played. Better than *Zelda* on the N64. It's so good I feel embarrassed for anyone else working on a game – they might as well delete it. I've been having dreams about *Half-Life,* and that only happens when a game is exceptional. It's hard, but not in an unfair way. It's f**king brilliant.

Chris: With *Quake I* and *II* I never felt anything revolutionary had happened to the genre. When I played *Half-Life* I felt like I did when I first played *Doom.*

Richie: But on the negative side…

Steve: What negative side? Go home.

Charlie: All the scientists have the same voice. Apart from that there's nothing else bad to say about it.

Macca: I'm going to the bar.

JEDI KNIGHT/MYSTERIES OF THE SITH

Mallo: *Jedi Knight* – what a f**king great game.

Richie: Superb value now they've released it with the add-on pack.

Macca: Whooo! Hang out the bunting!

Steve: Hold the front page!

Mallo: Thirty quid though!

Half-Life = no social life.

Chris: It is good value, but next to *Half-Life* it doesn't look all that great.

Charlie: I didn't like the look of it from the off. It seemed a little too artificial.

Macca: I don't care, gameplay is everything.

Richie: It still plays superbly. It's *Star Wars,* for Christ's sake. It's the only one there is and that's all you need.

Mallo: It's still got some of the best level design I've ever seen. The music can't be bettered in any game of this sort.

Macca: Yeah, it's got an advantage there though.

Mallo: Okay, the colours are a bit crap and some of the modelling's not that brilliant, but when I played it I was totally immersed. Lights off, sound turned up full, scared as shit…

Macca: You get totally immersed when you go to the toilet.

Mallo: I had a great time. I just couldn't put it down. I was up until four or five in the morning.

Macca: Yeah, but you can never put it down when you go to the toilet.

Mallo: There are comparisons to

be drawn there… but I think that some of the level design is the best I've ever seen. I'm scared of heights and I was genuinely afraid of falling down some of those bottomless pits.

Macca: Oh my god, how pathetic does that sound? How can you be scared of heights inside a game?!

Steve: Pull yourself together, man.

Richie: It was exactly the same with me. Vertigo sufferers must face their fears.

Macca: Well I'm scared of guns and being shot, but you don't see me running away screaming in multiplayer games.

Mallo: You reviewed it, Macca, you gave it 94 per cent. What do you think?

Macca: Did I review it? I must have wiped it from my memory. No, I really liked it. I found it really exciting. It was very immersive, but I have to agree with Chris that its engine and looks have dated. Gameplay-wise though, it's still impressive.

JEDI KNIGHT/MYSTERIES OF THE SITH

The oldest game here has just been repackaged with the superb mission pack *Mysteries Of The Sith* (PCZ #62, 95%). Suitably difficult, well-designed but lacking the graphical bells and whistles of more modern efforts, *Jedi* is nothing if not great value. And it's *Star Wars*

SCORE	PCZ #55, 94%
DEVELOPER	LucasArts
PUBLISHER	LucasArts
PRICE	£29.99
ENGINE	Dark Forces II

The Jedi Knight/Mysteries Of The Sith bundle is superb value.

Chris: When *Jedi* came out it was really exciting, because *Unreal, SiN* and *Quake II* still hadn't appeared.

Given that you can walk into a shop and choose any of these

> ## "I'm scared of heights and I was genuinely afraid of falling down some of those bottomless pits"
>
> **MALLO ON *JEDI KNIGHT: MYSTERIES OF THE SITH***

games, how much would you want to recommend it to people above *Half-Life*?

Mallo: I'd still play it, and the leap from *Jedi Knight* to *Mysteries Of The Sith* is pretty great. I played *Sith* all the way through and it was bloody difficult. At no point did I throw my mouse down in anger. Well, maybe I did, but at no point did I not want to complete it.

Richie: I think *Sith* was too difficult. But it's a mission pack, and if you've completed the original missions you'd want something a bit more challenging. The puzzles are certainly a step up from *Jedi's,* almost a whole new game in some respects. Multiplayer was good as well.

Macca: I thought multiplayer was shit. The testament is: are we playing it now? No, we're not. LucasArts have never created a good multiplayer game. To them multiplayer is just window dressing. They're in the business of making great single-player games.

Mallo: But we played it and I quite

liked it. The Force powers added quite a bit to it.

Macca: And there's no blood in it.

Steve: What, you need blood to play a game, do you? There was no blood in *Star Wars, Star Wars* is a f**king cartoon.

Macca: Don't you touch *Star Wars. Star Wars* is the most important thing in my life.

Mallo: I can't believe you're so against it after loving it in your review. *Jedi Knight* was a massive leap from the original *Dark Forces* (PCZ #24, 95%), more so than *Half-Life* is to *Jedi Knight.*

Macca: I was a different person then. A lot of things have happened. Anyway, we're looking at these games from today's perspective: if you go into a shop and you've got 30 quid, which game should you buy? Which one is the best?

Mallo: Even today this is my third choice out of all of these.

Macca: But it's not your first, so shut up.

Richie: But a lot of people may

already have *Quake II* and *Half-Life.* Maybe they want the next best thing?

Macca: You can't say that *Jedi* was a major leap forward from *Dark Forces,* because that's

irrelevant. What matters is the quality of the game *now.*

Chris: So if you've got 60 quid to spend on two games, is *Jedi Knight* going to be one of them? I'd say no.

Mallo: Possibly.

Chris: Well that's helpful. More beers, please…

KLINGON: HONOUR GUARD

Chris: *Klingon* – Steve, justify yourself.

Steve: It's a question of timing. It was lucky to come along before *SiN* and *Half-Life.*

Mallo: The coloured lighting was excellent, it really added to the atmosphere.

Macca: Who gives a shit about coloured lights? It's not a feature. *Unreal* had the words 'coloured lights' on its box.

Steve: Madmen have coloured lights in their head. Christmas trees have coloured lights…

Mallo: So what else has it got going for it if not coloured lights? That's the only thing I can see.

Macca: It's *Star Trek.* I love *Star*

> ## "It's the best game I've played for years. It's how games used to be"
>
> **MACCA ON *HALF-LIFE***

Trek. It's probably the best *Star Trek* game ever. Isn't it?

Steve: At the time I loved it, but that's the nature of the beast. Within three months I thought it looked silly.

Richie: I think it looks pretty good, the fact it's *Star Trek* is good, and the dagger – whatever it's called – is a great weapon.

But the level design is pretty poor and the AI is bog-standard.

Steve: There are loads of great little things about it – the botmatch, the gravity boots – but it's limited by the *Star Trek* licence. You can't kill any of the Federation or take over the Enterprise. A missed opportunity.

Macca: Loads of nice touches but very little substance. Singing and dancing, but not very well.

Mallo: It'll sell well in Germany. Is it a victim of progress?

Macca: Possibly, yes.

Steve: I played it for a week and I enjoyed it. If I'd have bought it I might still be playing it. I really didn't think that *Half-Life* was going to come along and piss on everything else the way it did.

Mallo: Are we embarrassed about giving it the score that we did?

Chris: No, I'm more embarrassed about giving *Unreal* the score that we did. *Klingon* is better than *Unreal*, and the only way we could get that across was by giving it a higher score.

Richie: The difference between *Klingon* and *Unreal* is that *Klingon*'s level design isn't particularly great, but it's faster paced than *Unreal*. You progress quicker. There's none of that looking around at insects that you get in *Unreal*, it's far more action-orientated.

Steve: You're running about, your heart is beating like mad. What else do you want? The FMV is good, well-produced. You *are* a Klingon. Some people actually like that.

Hands up those who want to be a Klingon.

> **"You can't kill any of the Federation or take over the Enterprise. A missed opportunity"**
>
> STEVE ON *KLINGON: HONOUR GUARD*

Charlie: I didn't. And I don't like you either, Steve. You're a complete twat. *Klingon* is just like *Unreal* but with worse actors.

Richie: Can we have a piss break?

QUAKE II

Chris: I really didn't enjoy *Quake*, and I thought *Quake II* was going to be so much better. It was a good game but I just don't think it was as revolutionary as people thought at the time. People just thought: it's iD, it's their new engine, it must be good.

Charlie: I really liked *Quake*, so I'll stand by *Quake II*. But there's too much orange.

Macca: *Quake* was flawed, but the question is: Is *Quake II* still a good game? I think it is.

Mallo: It's got great atmosphere, and I was scared shitless when I first played both *Quake I* and *II*. Maybe I'm easily scared?

Macca: You're a poof. You'd be scared by a bloody spider. I think you should be wearing a wet suit with the bum cut out.

Mallo: A lot of it was to do with the sound. You could recognise the monsters growling around the corner.

Macca: Some of the level design was brilliant. It's very easy to pan it in the advent of *Half-Life*, but it still plays extremely well. And as a network game it's still great.

Mallo: The level designs were excellent and the balance of weapons is the best we've seen.

Macca: They are good. We should all have the railgun in real life. But in *Half-Life* most of the weapons are useful in a deathmatch situation. In *Quake II* there are a couple of weapons which are just a waste of time. In *Half-Life*, as with *Doom*, if you're good you can take anybody out with any weapon.

Macca: The ending was shit and the end monster was pathetic. The plot was slapped on at the last minute. *Quake II* was the last of its kind in that respect. We're more sophisticated now, but it's still a good waste of a weekend.

Mallo: Especially with the mission packs. But there was a missed opportunity with level design. You should've been able to team up with survivors against the strogg.

Macca: And kiss them, maybe? A homosexual mission pack for *Quake II*? The fact is that if you buy *Quake II*, you've got a whole world of patches, levels and total conversions. It's got infinite longevity.

Chris: There are two things to remember about *Quake II*: the single-player game is boring, but with everything that's available from the Net it's great value for money, if nothing else. iD make average games but exceptional 3D engines.

Macca: The single-player game is

> **"The single-player game is boring, but with everything that's available from the Net it's great value for money"**
>
> CHRIS ON *QUAKE II*

Richie: I never finished single-player *Quake II* because I got bored. I haven't touched single-player for a year. Now, with *Half-Life* around, I don't even play deathmatch anymore. *Quake II* is dead.

not boring. It's been surpassed, but that doesn't mean it's shit. It's engaging, and if you want to get anywhere in the world of 3D shooters, especially multiplayer, you have to look at *Quake II*.

KLINGON: HONOUR GUARD

The first of many up-and-coming games to make use of the *Unreal* engine. Although it's suffered since *Half-Life* appeared, it's a game that *Star Trek* fans should love. The level design is a bit pants, but this game is action all the way. Leave your brain at home

SCORE	PCZ #68, 94%
DEVELOPER	MicroProse
PUBLISHER	MicroProse
PRICE	£34.99
ENGINE	Unreal

QUAKE II

The single-player game is looking very basic by today's standards, but for the deathmatch aficionado *Quake II*'s fast-paced combat, coupled with the almost perfect railgun, makes it a game worth shelling out for. If you've got access to a modem it's a must

SCORE	PCZ #59, 97%
DEVELOPER	iD
PUBLISHER	Activision
PRICE	£29.99
ENGINE	Quake II

Chris isn't impressed by *Quake II*, but eveyone else is.

We've been playing it for over a year, almost every day. Will we be saying the same of *Half-Life* this time next year? After *Quake III* and *Duke 4Ever*? I think not.

SHOGO: MOBILE ARMOUR DIVISION

Mallo: What the hell does '*Shogo*' stand for?

Richie: I haven't got a clue.

Macca: They should've called it *Tenko*. With a host of women and David Yip kicking about.

Mallo: I thought *Shogo*'s graphical impact was great – the explosions were spectacular. The LithTech engine lends itself well to that visual style – quite flat, pastelly and bright. The engine didn't fit quite so well to *Blood II*, which was meant to be dark, but with *Shogo* it gelled really well.

Steve: The music was incredible; that theme tune was so unsuitable. And then there's people's heads being blown off in the background. The first mission

> ## The thing about *Shogo*, above *Half-Life*, is the frenetic pace. I couldn't stop playing it
>
> RICHIE ON *SHOGO: MOBILE ARMOUR DIVISION*

was like going to work. I stopped playing it, it was like a job 'em up – you get told off by your boss. In *Half-Life* it did this well, but in *Shogo* I was bored and started killing people for fun. I didn't have the patience for it.

Macca: If you'd bought it you would. There are two things that struck me about the game.

The first was the cool Mecha levels where you could stamp on those little blokes, although it wasn't convincing all the time. Secondly, the dialogue was actually quite witty.

Richie: You've got the *MechWarrior*-style play and the *Quake*-style controls. There's a completely different feel to each thanks to the two sets of weapons, even though the gameplay is practically identical.

Charlie: I've never been a big fan of Mechs, they're for people who feel inadequate in their physical shells. But I love the Animé influence.

Chris: There's variety that you don't usually get in this type of game.

Macca: Variety doesn't have to be new weapons or enemies though, it should simply be the situations you find yourself in. Saying that, the setting and the graphical style

are different from other games. The in-game cut-scenes are actually quite good. I'm not sure about the weapons though.

Richie: The weapons are superb, especially with the

Real-world environments in *SiN*. Which is nice.

SHOGO: MOBILE ARMOUR DIVISION

Lacking in the artificial intelligence department, *Shogo* is a game that delivers in every other department. With its mix of *Quake* and *MechWarrior* action it's a refreshing change and features a superbly scripted plot and great graphical finesse

	PCZ #71, 92%
SCORE	
DEVELOPER	Monolith
PUBLISHER	Microids
PRICE	£39.99
ENGINE	LithTech

Quake meets *Battle Of The Planets* in *Shogo*.

smoke effects. There's a level where you begin in a Mecha on one side of this heavily defended bridge and you have to bring all your ordinance to bear on troops, tanks and enemy Mechas. You just keep shooting away and everything becomes clouded in debris and smoke – you're just blindly firing into rolling clouds of debris. I'm not saying it's realistic, but no other game recreates the confusion of war so well.

Macca: Do you get out much, Richie?

Richie: The thing about *Shogo*, above *Half-Life*, is the frenetic pace. I couldn't stop playing it.

Macca: But with *Shogo* you're storming through the countryside in a bloody great robot suit. In *Half-Life* you're crawling through tunnels, outnumbered and outgunned. It's a slower,

scarier process. Is it better or worse? I don't know.

Richie: It's not a case of being better, *Shogo* just gripped me more. When I finished *Half-Life*, I thought "yeah, great game". When I finished *Shogo* I wanted a sequel right away. My heart was pumping all the way through the game. I should have died.

Steve: I wish you had…

Mallo: Another thing is the swarm of infantry running around your feet. They can be hard to locate and you've got to watch the little rocket trails.

Macca: One negative point is that the sense of scale they've created doesn't always work. The cities look like *Doom* levels with window textures on the walls.

Richie: In *Half-Life* you're playing a part in your favourite film, in *Shogo* you're playing a part in your favourite Animé cartoon.

Steve: I haven't got a favourite Animé cartoon. I saw *Akira* once, but that's it.

Mallo: One problem is that the enemies don't notice you until you get really close.

Richie: They don't have a line of sight, more like a sphere of influence. You can take out one guy and the one next to him won't even budge. Multiplayer was good though, especially if you try out the Mecha levels. It's a shame you can't have humans versus Mechas though. After *Half-Life*, I think *Shogo* is the best 3D game out at the moment. Easily better

than *Quake II*, single-player at least. And halfway through the game you're asked who you fancy, your ex-girlfriend or your boss's daughter. It's cheesy, but it fits in with the whole style of the game. It's refreshing.

Macca: I don't want to be asked who I fancy in the middle of a bleeding game. I play games to escape that kind of crap!

Steve: I play games to escape your kind of crap.

SiN

Chris: I think *SiN* is f**king brilliant. Before I played *Half-Life* I thought that 3D shoot 'em ups just weren't my thing. I didn't like *Quake II* and I thought there was something wrong with me. I loved *Duke 3D*, but it was only *Half-Life* and *SiN* that made me realise that I *do* like these kind of games; I do love running around shooting people in the face. What *SiN* has that *Quake II* lacks is loads of open environments. It's a gorgeous-looking game and has lots of real-life buildings and lots of stuff you can identify with that you don't normally get with this type of game.

Charlie: It's nice and colourful.

Mallo: And the head shots count for a hell of a lot. They don't work nearly as well in any other game.

Richie: True, but I can't bear the game. I hate the characters. I hate the voice-overs. Pure cheese. I can't play through a single level ➔

SiN

Responsible for the excellent *Scourge Of Armagon* (PCZ #49, 90%), the first mission pack for *Quake I*, Ritual follow up with a diverse 3D shooter whose only failing is its gung-ho arse of a main character. Great level design, real-world settings and a fine selection of weapons

	PCZ #70, 91%
SCORE	
DEVELOPER	Ritual
PUBLISHER	Activision
PRICE	£34.99
ENGINE	Quake II

> ## There's an unnerving glee to be had from being incredibly violent
>
> MALLO ON *SiN*

SOMETHING NEW

Kingpin is almost with us. Check out the update on page 38.

If you thought the first-person genre was in danger, think again

If nothing else, 1999 will be the year that sees the first-person genre evolve. *Half-Life* has changed the way we look at single-player games. We want more adventure, more involvement. Its cutting-edge AI has moved the goalposts, and woe betide any developer who doesn't take a leaf out of Valve's book.

Quake III Arena and *Team Fortress II* will see multiplayer gaming reach a whole new level while adapting single-player games to fit in with the same style. Of the other games, *X-COM: Alliance* and *Hired Guns* will add a tactical element, giving you control of teams of characters; *Duke Nukem 4Ever* mixes up the action with heavily scripted missions; while *Kingpin* looks like being genuinely funny. My God, we haven't even mentioned *Kanaan*, *Prey* and *Requiem*, all of which look mightily impressive. If you thought the whole genre was in danger of disappearing up its own arse, think again.

SOMETHING BORROWED

Duke Nukem 3D: old, but still a favourite – somewhere.

Smart developers use someone else's engine, and work on gameplay

Licensing other people's 3D engines is nothing new. *Heretic* (PCZ #25, 78%) used the *Doom* engine to good effect, enabling you to look up and down (well, it was impressive back then); *Duke 3D*'s Build engine was used in *Blood* and *Shadow Warrior*; and, most impressive of all, *Half-Life* uses the original *Quake* engine. The point is that it's far easier to license a tried and tested engine – it leaves developers to concentrate on gameplay, which is a good thing. And it's a good thing for the original authors as well. You can bet your bottom Eurodollar that ID have made more money from licensing their wares than they have from their own games. Problems only arise when games developers fail to make the engine their own – both *Klingon* and *SiN* come across as total conversions to some extent. Still, if future games follow *Half-life*'s lead, we'll hardly care.

SOMETHING POO

Virtuoso: a game that… Oh, what's the point.

If you're gonna rip off another game, at least make a decent job of it

We've seen some shit games come through the ZONE office over the years, the majority riding on the coat tails of whichever was the latest 3D shooter popular at the time.

The worst one at the moment has to be *Nam* (PCZ #68, 28%), for the simple reason that it's two years out of date (it uses the Build engine, for heaven's sake). *Chasm: The Rift* was a pretty dire *Quake* rip-off that came out last year, but worse of all was *Virtuoso* (which was so pants that we didn't review it), a *Doom*-inspired monstrosity that had you killing aliens with guitar riffs. There are others, of course, but we just can't think of the names.

⬅ without wanting to get the lead character killed. I want to play the game as the enemy so I can shut the pony-tailed bastard up for good.
Chris: At the beginning of each level you've got these cutscenes…
Macca: They're rubbish.
Chris: They're *not* rubbish. They're not as good as *Half-Life*'s, we're all agreed on that.
Macca: *Half-Life* doesn't have cut-scenes, it doesn't need them. *SiN* reminds me of *Malice*, that add-on for *Quake*.
Richie: Basically, *SiN is* an add-on. It should've been £9.99.

Mallo: That's a bit harsh. I like *SiN* because it's the most violent game of the lot. There's an unnerving glee to be had from being incredibly violent. I like the weapons as well, especially the machine gun. It's a good game, it's just that in the light of *Half-Life* it's not the best.
Richie: *SiN* is basically a *Duke Nukem* stopgap.
Chris: What's wrong with that? *Duke Nukem 3D* is one of the best games of all time. If someone asked me if I'd like to play a game with today's technology, today's graphics, in a *Duke Nukem 3D* stylee, I would

say give it to me now.
Charlie: I could do without having characters with big tits though.
Richie: Or characters who *are* big tits.

UNREAL

Charlie: Oh here we go. It's 'let's kick Charlie in the head' time. Come on then…
Macca: What happened with *Unreal* is they crammed all the best ideas into the first episode. It really flattens out after that.
Mallo: It annoys me that people still think that it's the best first-person shoot 'em up. People online are still saying it's the

> **"It was the first game to include bots, which is a big plus if you don't play online"**
>
> **CHARLIE ON *UNREAL***

benchmark game and better than *Quake II*.
Chris: All the criticisms we level at *Quake II* can quite easily be levelled at *Unreal*. It's a 3D engine looking for a game.
Mallo: *Quake II* is a far, far better game than *Unreal*. Even after all that development I don't even think the engine is *that* good. It doesn't feel right either. The walking speed isn't quite there. And the weapons – they're not very ominous, are they?
Macca: They're pathetic. They're like bloody potato guns.
Chris: *Unreal* looks gorgeous though, and some levels look amazing.
Mallo: Nice reflective floors.
Steve: What *is* a reflective floor,

for god's sake?! Who sees that kind of shit?
Charlie: We do. And don't say you weren't impressed, we all were. *Unreal* has something for everyone. The single-player game has action and adventure. It was the first game to include bots, which is a big plus if you don't play online. Granted, it's not the best of its type, but it does have elements that stand out. I just can't think of any at the moment.
Richie: The thing about *Unreal* is that it tried to incorporate an adventure plot into an action game. You really feel immersed, but you can't do the things that you want to do. The creatures you're trying to protect end up getting themselves killed and you can't stop them. It's far too obviously scripted. It's nowhere near as good a multiplayer game as *Quake II*.
Charlie: I think that the best is yet to come with this engine. It's superb, and if it wasn't for the *Unreal* engine we wouldn't have the games coming out this year that we're looking forward to. I liked *Unreal*, but then I would say that, wouldn't I?
Macca: If it had come out when it was supposed to it would have blown the opposition away. The fact is that *Half-Life* is the best game on the PC today. End of story. Fin. PCZ

🔘 *So, what do you think? Picking one first-person shooter as the best ever is obviously going to provoke heated debate. Well, we've had our say and now it's your turn. Do you agree with the results of our prolonged discussion, or are you offended that Half-Life's been rated higher than your favourite game? Let us know by writing or emailing Feedback (details on page 106). But sorry, you'll have to buy your own beer.*

UNREAL

The *Quake II* versus *Unreal* battle is over, silenced by the arrival of *Half-Life*. Many people still rate *Unreal* over everything else, but we think it's a shallow triumph of graphics over gameplay. Keep an eye on the engine though, the best is yet to come

	PCZ #65, 93%
SCORE	
	Epic
DEVELOPER	
	GT Interactive
PUBLISHER	
	£29.99
PRICE	
	Unreal
ENGINE	

Unreal: very good, just not great.

TOP TRUMPS

Rather than just re-review the games, we thought we'd let the words speak for themselves. These are the categories we argued and fought over

ATMOSPHERE Graphics, sound, storyline. Are you really there, fighting for your life in an alternative universe? Or is it just a virtual reality videogame that makes you think you are?

LEVEL DESIGN Do the tricks and traps annoy you, or do they have you coming back for more? Does each level feel the same as the last, or is it a new challenge every time?

AI How do the bad guys react when you walk into a room? Do they run blindly into certain death, or do they dodge, duck and work together to blast you a new arsehole?

WEAPONS Every game has a shotgun and a BFG-type blaster, but are the weapons balanced, or is it just a case of finding the rocket launcher? It's important to remember that more weapons doesn't necessarily mean better gameplay.

MULTIPLAY The single-player game may rock bells, but you won't be playing it forever. If the multiplayer game is anything like *Quake*'s, then you may well be.

HALF-LIFE
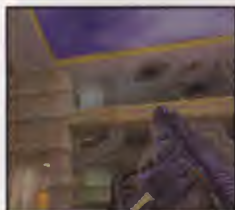
Category	Score
ATMOSPHERE	10
LEVEL DESIGN	9
AI	9
WEAPONS	9
MULTIPLAYER	9

SHOGO: MOBILE ARMOUR DIVISION

Category	Score
ATMOSPHERE	8
LEVEL DESIGN	7
AI	5
WEAPONS	8
MULTIPLAYER	7

QUAKE II

Category	Score
ATMOSPHERE	7
LEVEL DESIGN	7
AI	4
WEAPONS	8
MULTIPLAYER	9

KLINGON: HONOUR GUARD

Category	Score
ATMOSPHERE	6
LEVEL DESIGN	3
AI	7
WEAPONS	3
MULTIPLAYER	5

SIN

Category	Score
ATMOSPHERE	7
LEVEL DESIGN	8
AI	6
WEAPONS	6
MULTIPLAYER	7

BLOOD II: THE CHOSEN

Category	Score
ATMOSPHERE	6
LEVEL DESIGN	7
AI	7
WEAPONS	7
MULTIPLAYER	3

JEDI KNIGHT/MYSTERIES OF THE SITH

Category	Score
ATMOSPHERE	9
LEVEL DESIGN	8
AI	7
WEAPONS	6
MULTIPLAYER	5

UNREAL

Category	Score
ATMOSPHERE	6
LEVEL DESIGN	6
AI	6
WEAPONS	3
MULTIPLAYER	4

AND THE WINNER IS...

Half-Life might have been voted the best first-person shooter out there, but don't write off the others – or underestimate those to come

Top of the trumps is *Half-Life*. Then again, was there ever any doubt over the outcome?

The conversation continued. After seven pints aplece (and a bottle of wine for Macca, because he's posh), a clear winner was decided: *Half-Life*. No surprise there. But then we had to decide on where the other titles fell in the grand scheme of things. We discussed multiplayer games until we could no longer form coherent sentences. Chris and I almost came to blows over *SIN*, Chris and Macca nearly fell out over *Quake*, and Mallo stormed off at one point, claiming that *Jedi Knight* was getting a raw deal (he came back

five minutes later after leaving his bag under the table). Charlie fought a losing battle in defence of *Unreal*, while Steve even managed to find a criticism for *Half-Life*: "It doesn't run on my machine at home."

In the end, four of us voted *Quake II* into second place, Chris voted for *SIN* and I went for *Shogo*. Third place went to both *Shogo* and *SIN* after getting two votes each. It's impossible to place the rest. We couldn't decide, and the bar staff were drumming their fingers – it was almost chucking out time.

All we could agree on was the overall loser: *Unreal*. That's not to say it's a bad game; in many ways it's excellent. And although there could be only one overall winner, it's worth pointing out that every game here was awarded a score of 85 per cent-plus. Our aim was to level the playing field before the new crop of games come along. Soon we'll have *Aliens Vs Predator*, *Prey*, *Duke 4Ever*, *Kingpin* and *X-COM: Alliance*. If they all live up to our expectations, we'll see them all this year.

Same time, same place. Be there.

FEEDBACK

You read our review, you bought the game and made your own mind up. So, did playing it make you lose sleep or the will to live? *Mark Hill* sorts the odes from the suicide notes

> ❝ *Rainbow Six* scores high on the atmosphere scale but gets bugger all for the AI – to be honest, it's pretty crap ❞
>
> **GARETH PRIESTLY**

HALF-LIFE
REVIEWED Issue 71, Xmas
SCORE 95%
What we thought

PC ZONE CLASSIC "The levels are largely seamless, melding into each other fluidly. Many of them require a lot of retracing of steps, and getting lost can be annoying, although at no point do you ever actually want to stop playing."

What you think

⊙ "This game is indeed fantastic, until you have to work your way through the last three or four levels – it's like being thrown back in time playing *Doom*. Having to deal with bosses is not the way to end games any more."

Pieter van Dieren

⊙ "Yes, it's a good game. Yes, the AI is excellent. But better than *Quake II* (or *Quake*, for that matter)? No way! Call me old-fashioned, but I like my first-person shooters fast, furious and action-packed; I don't want a succession of tricky jumps and petty conundrums interrupting the flow. *Half-Life* has these in abundance in the early levels, and it got right on my tits."

Alex Lohfink

⊙ "*Half-Life* is pretty good until you get to the Xen stages, then it turns into a load of shite. The controls are okay, but you don't feel as in command as you do in *Quake II*. And whoever's bright idea it was to have loading pauses as you run down a corridor in the middle of a firefight wants stringing up!"

Jason Forster

⊙ "There's something about *Half-Life*. Perhaps it's the amazing graphics. Or perhaps it's the enemy creature's AI. Or it could be the NPCs that you can interact with. I reckon it's a brilliant mixture of all these things. If you want to know which game to get from a choice of *SiN*, *Quake II*, *Unreal* or *Half-Life*, get *Half-Life* now."

Ric Burns

SETTLERS III
REVIEWED Issue 72, January
SCORE 88%
What we thought

PC ZONE RECOMMENDED "Time to lose your mind overseeing the lives of small pretend people for whom you are prepared to give up unhealthily large chunks of your life."

What you think

⊙ "I've just read your review of *Settlers III*. Great piece, but with one glaring omission: the first two games were single-player only, but *Settlers III* supports all the usual multiplayer options. It certainly adds to the longevity of the game."

Paul Jones

RAINBOW SIX
REVIEWED Issue 69, November
SCORE 89%
What we thought

PC ZONE RECOMMENDED "While there are few opportunities to get into huge firefights, *Rainbow Six* is one of those rare games where the level of tension more than makes up for its failings."

What you think

⊙ "*Rainbow Six* scores high on the atmosphere scale but gets bugger all for the AI – to be honest, it's pretty crap. I get so frustrated when one of my men doesn't follow me up a ladder and decides to run around like a loony instead. And sometimes you're standing right in front of an enemy and he doesn't shoot you."

Gareth Priestley

Settlers III: review didn't mention support for multiplayer options.

X-COM 3: APOCALYPSE
REVIEWED Issue 71, Xmas
SCORE 90% (budget)
What we thought

PC ZONE CLASSIC "This is easily the best game in the *X-COM* series and could be the last one in the saga to use traditional tactical combat. And it's brilliant. So buy it."

What you think

⊙ "How the hell can this bug-laden and flawed strategy game be regarded a classic? Many of the options and features are completely pointless, and some parts of the game don't function properly; the aiming/shooting system is shite. I accept that people have personal preferences, but please keep bias out."

Don Howard

THIEF: THE DARK PROJECT
REVIEWED Issue 72, January
SCORE 90%
What we thought

PC ZONE CLASSIC "The sound adds a whole new level of realism to the game and boosts

Half-Life: better than *Quake II* (or even *Quake*)? No way, says Alex Lohfink.

the whole 'total immersion' thing to previously unattained levels. This is an aspect of the engine that should be heeded by the rest of the genre."

What you think

✪ "I have to say that *Thief* is on a par with *Half-Life*. The AI isn't as good, and neither are the graphics, but *Half-Life* is a very straight affair: you go in, shoot the bad guys, wander around for a bit then shoot some more. *Thief* is good for different reasons. The way you have to avoid contact is brilliant, as is the nail-biting atmosphere."

'Thief'

WAR OF THE WORLDS

REVIEWED Issue 72, January
SCORE 85%
What we thought

PC ZONE **RECOMMENDED** "*War Of The Worlds* may have its flaws, but in a year that's seen little in the way of innovation it's a major advancement from the *C&C* clone, and comes highly recommended."

What you think

✪ "As far as I'm concerned the music is a huge plus. I opted to play as the Martians: huge metal tripods and human farms – too cool to pass up. I love it, and I can live with the swapping between screens. I love the logic of the tech trees – unlike other games I could mention, you don't get to research a counter-measure. I love the British naval units, although the 'vanishing ships' bug is irritating. Basically, naval units can disappear, which is an expensive loss. *Philadelphia Experiment*, anyone?"

Greg Brown

NEED FOR SPEED III

REVIEWED Issue 69, November
SCORE 91%
What we thought

PC ZONE **CLASSIC** "The level of AI of the competitors and the police must be highlighted as being the best we've come across in a racing game."

What you thought

✪ "Electronic Arts have, in my opinion, created a masterpiece. Having bought each and every one of their games to date, I always look forward to their latest release, and with *Hot Pursuit* they really have produced the whole package. Purely because of this game I have at last got connected to the Net to download the cars, and have upgraded from a 4Mb

3Dfx card to a 12Mb 3Dfx2 – a testament to any great game."

Felix

POPULOUS: THE BEGINNING

REVIEWED Issue 70, December
SCORE 92%
What we thought

PC ZONE **CLASSIC** "When co-founder Peter Molyneux left to form Lionhead, many doubted whether the company he left behind would be able to maintain the high standards it had achieved under his command. On this showing, they're capable of surpassing them."

What you think

✪ "This is a *must* for anyone who just barely likes strategy/god games. The graphics are the best I've seen and the game runs smoothly in software mode on the highest graphic settings possible. I didn't think Bullfrog would be able to release another classic game without Molyneux, but they've definitely done it.

Replying to Thomas Le-Luan from issue 72, I have to say that Bullfrog are releasing sequels because they're geniuses. They know that the ideas they already have can all get Classic status. It takes creativity to produce sequels too, you know."

Zulfi

FIFA 99

REVIEWED Issue 71, Xmas
SCORE 92%
What we thought

PC ZONE **CLASSIC** "*FIFA 99* represents a worthy successor to *World Cup 98* and is a much more playable and enjoyable experience."

What you think

✪ "*FIFA 99* is a great game, but there are quite a few stupid and

annoying little things wrong with it. The first is the way certain skills make little difference to how a player plays: eg players with pace 10 (or less) easily catch up with a sprinting pace 16 player. This is in the middle level, so surely it should be fair to both you and the computer opponent? The second is the way players virtually never score with long-range shots. Even hotshots like Beckham and Owen never seem to score from about 20 yards – hardly realistic."

Jon Bailiss

✪ "The graphics are amazing, there are so many grounds, and the cut-scenes are great. I bought *World Cup 98*, but this game is even better."

James Sharpe

WARGASM

REVIEWED Issue 71, Xmas
SCORE 93%
What we thought

PC ZONE **CLASSIC** "It does for military simulators what *Command & Conquer* did for wargames: makes them accessible, fast and fun."

What you think

✪ "This game has it all. Looks, action, pace and variety are just a few of its charms. I love the way you can choose how you want to play – full-on armoured charge through the front door, or a more stealthy, 'sneak a few troops round the back and pop 'em off one at a time' approach.

There's no set path like in some games (*Red Alert* and *Commandos*, to name two otherwise excellent games), so the replay value is immense. And the variety and detail in the units is a delight to behold. War never looked so good. I admit it's not perfect – you need a top bollocks machine to run it (my 350P2 with 192Mb RAM and Voodoo2 still

TRESPASSER

REVIEWED Issue 72, January
SCORE 70%
What we thought

"Try it. If you can live with the inadequacies, then you're sure to find the full game more than enjoyable."

What you think

✪ "I think your review of *Trespasser* was a farce. I feel that a game of this quality and with this much hype should have at least got two whole pages of your usually excellent magazine. Instead you gave it a measly half a page, on which readers decide whether or not to buy it. In my opinion it should have received at least 85 per cent. It's packed with tension and atmosphere (especially when the raptors are chasing you), it's very realistic and hugely exciting to play, and it makes a superb change from the usual *Quake* clones."

Mark Clayton

✪ "I think you're being a little harsh on *Trespasser* by giving it 70 per cent and sticking it at the back of the mag. Which other shoot 'em up can claim such realism and 'real physics' as those used in *Trespasser*? The storyline is engrossing, the game is huge, and nothing gets your pants damper than a T-Rex hurtling towards you when you've got only an Uzi to defend yourself.

When *System Shock* and *Future Shock* came out they were both great, engrossing games, but were ignored because they had no multiplayer support. In fact, they were ahead of their time, and this, I believe, is exactly the case with *Trespasser*."

Chris Steele-Davies

Trespasser: our review was "a farce", says Mark Clayton.

drops frames when it gets hectic), the AI of your own troops can be a bit thick, and some of the missions are damn tough, aggravating the fact that you can't save mid-game – but I still think it's one of the best games ever, and is up there with the likes of

Quake II, *Half-Life* (also a f**king incredible game) and *C&C*."

Mike Harris

BLOOD II

REVIEWED Issue 72, January
SCORE 88%
What we thought

PC ZONE **RECOMMENDED** "As a sequel to a criminally underrated game, *Blood II* is more than worthy. But two major faults prevent it from achieving Classic status: the first is the lack of pace, and the second is the AI."

What you think

✪ "My question isn't just 'Why didn't you make *Blood II* a Classic?' (because judging from the demo it should have got at least 90 per cent) but 'Why did *Shogo* get 92 per cent?' I think *Blood II* is better – it's got loads of blood and gore, and it has a good atmosphere. *Shogo* doesn't."

Chris

❝Electronic Arts have produced a masterpiece... With *Hot Pursuit* they really have produced the whole package❞

FELIX IS OBVIOUSLY IMPRESSED WITH *NEED FOR SPEED III*

Need For Speed III: a game worth upgrading and connecting to the Net for, reckons one reader.

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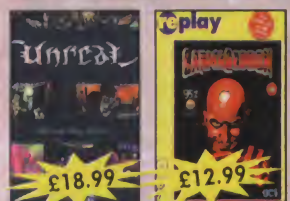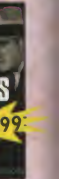
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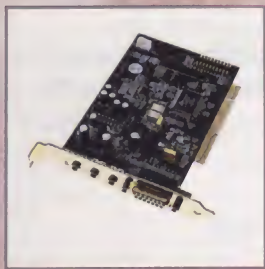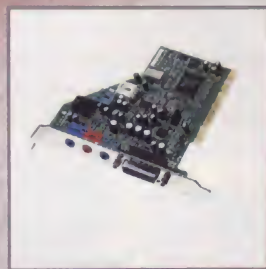
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SOUND

ADVICE

Everyone is obsessed with eking the most out of their 3D graphics card, but no one seems to be applying the same thought process to sound cards. *ZONE* locked *Tim Ponting* in a room for a month and didn't let him out until he could tell us which 3D sound cards to buy – and why

Sound hasn't come easy to the PC community. In the beginning, games developers had a beeping speaker to play with. Clever ones managed to get it to sound like a poor short-wave radio – anyone remember early flight sims with crackly radio messages like "Watch your six" that locked the PC each time they sounded?

In the late '80s came the first sound cards: AdLib developed a board that produced music using FM synthesiser chips (one step up from bleeps); and then Creative Labs delivered the killer punch – digital audio from pre-recorded 'Wave' files stored on the hard disk and played back via their ubiquitous SoundBlaster card. All of a sudden, games had sound effects.

As a result of this, until a couple of years ago gamers really only had a couple of considerations when choosing which sound card to buy: SoundBlaster compatibility, since DOS games tended to work properly only with this, and price. While the musical capabilities of sound cards improved with such innovations as WaveTable synthesis (using 'samples' of real instruments as opposed to FM

approximations of them), on the digital audio side the quality improved but little else.

But with the move from ISA to PCI bus and from DOS to Windows 95,

new opportunities presented themselves. The ISA bus wasn't capable of playing back loads of sound effects simultaneously – it was too 'narrow' in data transfer terms; the PCI bus was fatter than a packet of pork scratchings. Couple this with Windows 95 giving a set of 'hooks' for sound cards at operating system level (removing the need for SoundBlaster compatibility) and all of a sudden more sound effects could be played back at higher quality.

Then came DirectX. This was another more powerful set of 'hooks' that enabled developers to do increasingly sophisticated things with games without writing for particular peripherals (graphics cards, sound cards etc). One of the elements of DirectX was DirectSound, shortly followed by DirectSound3D, more of which in a moment.

A BRIEF LESSON IN AUDIO PHYSICS
If you don't want to know how 3D audio works, skip this bit. It's a bit tedious. But then again, you won't be able to bore people in the pub or online, will you?

Until recently, 3D audio needed to be pre-encoded and played back on special hardware. For example, home cinema buffs could play back films with sound effects coming out of speakers behind them. But this couldn't be done in real time, so it was useless for gamers except for playback in cut-scenes. Besides, you

needed at least four speakers and some special decoding hardware for it to work.

Then the boffins stepped in. We have just two ears, and we hear sound in 3D. So surely we could 'fake' 3D using two speakers? Obviously,

> ❝If you can afford it, go for a card with support for four speakers. You'll need an extra pair of powered speakers and long cabling as well, but it'll be worth it in the long run❞

placing sounds horizontally is easy enough: if it's to the left, then it arrives at the left ear first and is louder in that ear, and vice-versa. But what about telling whether a sound is coming from above or below, or in front or behind?

At universities round the world, men in lab coats fired sounds from different directions at artificial heads attached to artificial shoulders, and recorded how the sound received within the ear was different depending on which direction it came from. They discovered that the ear 'filters' sound depending on the direction it comes from and the brain decodes this information subconsciously. The boffins developed what they called Head-Related Transfer Functions (HRTF), a set of mathematical algorithms that could be applied to basic sounds to add positional information for decoding by the grey matter between our ears. (You have got some, haven't you?)

This is the basis of real-time 3D audio on the PC. There are a number of programming standards that developers can write for, the most important being Aureal and Sensaura.

Pretty much all 3D sound cards support one or the other or both. But Microsoft, bless 'em, stepped in with a new DirectX component called DirectSound3D, which was a subset of these more powerful standards, enabling all developers to write 3D sound into their games without worrying about specific 3D audio standards.

But it's not quite 'game over'. Unfortunately, clever though HRTF technology is, the men in white coats discovered that we're not as good at determining where sounds are coming from by using just our ears as we originally thought. Basically, if you sit someone in a room, blind-folded and with their head strapped rigidly in place, and fire sounds at them, they're okay at determining where sounds are coming from on a left-right scale, passable on an above-below scale – but what if they're coming from the front or from behind? Crap. Totally crap. You see, in real life we turn our head to decide whether a sound is coming from in front or behind. And two speakers (whether in headphones or cabinets in front of us) will never give us more information when we turn our heads. Thus, 3D audio works far, far better in four-speaker systems, where we *actually* have sounds coming from behind us. Then we can turn our head and know that the rocket that's about to toast our giblets is indeed coming from behind and not in front.

Of course, there are many other cues that help our brain. Vision is one. When you see a rocket coming at you, it's pretty clear the sound is in front. And for stuff like distance and movement, you have frequency shifts. ➔
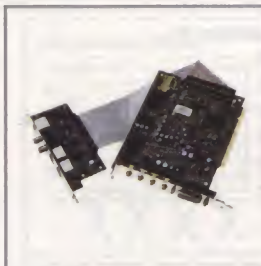
Sounds from afar have a different frequency pattern than the same sound close up. And moving sounds have 'doppler shift', where the pitch changes as they move towards or away (like an express train going through a station). The 3D algorithms used by DirectX take all this into account.

There's another problem. All these real-time calculations need a lot of processor power. The situation is exactly the same as with 3D graphics cards: games will hook into Direct3D, but if your graphics card isn't doing the calculations and shifting stuff about in its own hardware, it leaves your CPU and RAM to do the work – which slows the game down. The same goes for 3D audio: if the sound card isn't working out the 3D sound algorithms in hardware on the card, the game uses your CPU. And that slows things down.

Now you've got your audio physics certificate, let's get down to business: how does this mumbo jumbo affect your choice of sound card?

CHOOSING 3D SOUND CARDS

For best results, the techie stuff we've mentioned gives some clear indications as to what to look for. First off, the more calculations the sound card handles on board, the better. So you need one that features 'hardware acceleration' of 3D audio. The claims made on sound card boxes can be pretty misleading in this respect, so read the reviews of cards here carefully. Secondly, if your budget stretches to it, go for a card with support for four speakers. Remember: you'll need an extra pair of powered speakers and long cabling as well, but it'll be worth it. That's not to say 3D sound is useless without four speakers – DirectSound3D is surprisingly good with two when combined with the visual cues games give you – but the results are much better with four.

Also, it's clear that you should avoid ISA sound cards at all costs – they simply can't handle multiple sound effects adequately. Nearly all manufacturers have PCI cards aimed at the games market, and those that

SPECS

Buying a sound card? Check out our table that will give you nothing but the facts, man
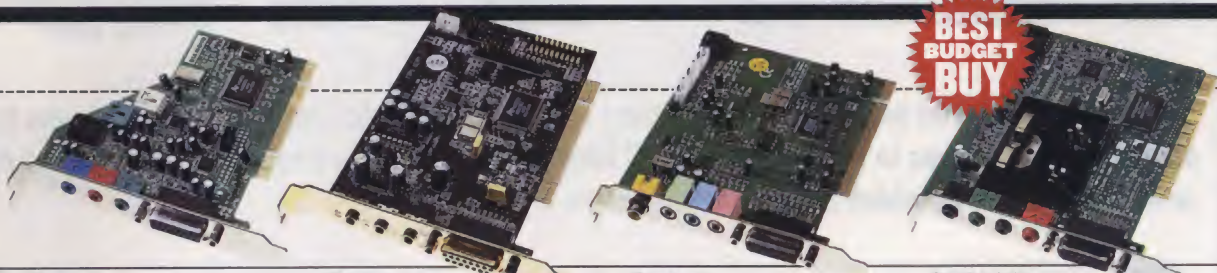
MANUFACTURER	Diamond	Terratec	VideoLogic	Creative Labs
MODEL	SonicImpact S90	XLerate	SonicStorm Pro	SoundBlaster PCI128
PRICE	£39	£59	£50	£49
SLOT TYPE	PCI	PCI	PCI	PCI
MAIN CHIPSET	Aureal Vortex AU8820B2	Aureal Vortex AU8820B2	ESS Maestro-2E	ES1370/CL5507
NUMBER OF HARDWARE ACCELERATED 3D STREAMS	8	8	8	32
4-SPEAKER SUPPORT	No	No	No	Yes
3D STANDARDS SUPPORTED	DS3D, A3D	DS3D, A3D	DS3D, Sensaura, A3D (emulated)	DS3D, A3D (emulated)
EXTERNAL CONNECTIONS	Line in, Mic in, Line out, Game/MIDI	Line in, Mic in, Line out, Game/MIDI	Line in, Mic in, Line out, S/P-DIF out, Game/MIDI	Mic in, Line out, Aux in/Rear out, Speaker out, Game/MIDI
INTERNAL CONNECTIONS	CD-Audio in, TAD in, Aux in, Video in	CD-Audio in, WaveBlaster daughterboard connector, Terratec Radio Connector	CD-Audio in, Aux in, Video in, PC speaker in, I2S digital in	CD-Audio in, TAD in, Video in
WAVETABLE SIZES	4Mb GM, uses system RAM, 64 voices	4Mb GM, uses system RAM, 64 voices	2 or 4Mb GM/XG, uses system RAM, 64-voice + 128-voice software	2, 4 or 8Mb GM/GS, uses system RAM, 128 voices
SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS	Win 95/98/NT4, P90 (P200MMX for 3D), 8Mb RAM (16Mb rec)	Win95/98/NT4, P100 (P200MMX rec), 16Mb RAM (32Mb rec)	Win 95/98/NT4, P75 (P166 for softsynth), 16Mb RAM (32Mb rec)	Win 95/98/NT4, P75, 16Mb RAM
EFFECTS	Chorus, Reverb	Chorus, Reverb	Chorus, Reverb, Flange, Echo, 3D	Chorus, Reverb, 3D
BUNDLED STUFF?	Midisoft Internet Bar, Midisoft Recording Studio	Command & Control, Cubasis, Ed!son Wave, Internet Phone, Mixman StudioBE, SmartWord	JetAudio, S-YXG50 softsynth, tons of useful shareware	Creative Multimedia Deck, WaveStudio, SoundOLE
WARRANTY	3 years	2 years	5 years	2 years
CONTACT	Diamond, 0118 944 4400, www.diamondmm.co.uk	Terratec, 01600 772 111, www.terratec.co.uk	VideoLogic, 01923 277488, www.videologic.co.uk	Creative Labs, 01245 265265, www.soundblaster.com
8 STREAMS	26%	26%	5%	9%
16 STREAMS	44%	44%	23%	14%
32 STREAMS	96%	96%	65%	28%
64 STREAMS				44%
NOTES	Maxed out before 64 streams	Maxed out before 64 streams	Maxed out before 64 streams	

GRAPH

Test machine: PII-300, 64Mb RAM. The left-hand scale shows CPU overhead (ie lower = better), the bottom scale shows number of DS3D streams played simultaneously

SonicImpact S90

XLerate

SonicStorm Pro

SoundBlaster PCI128
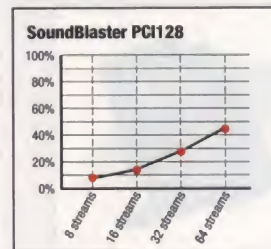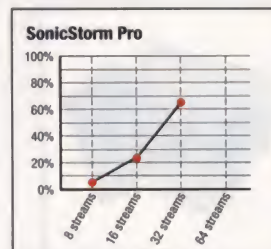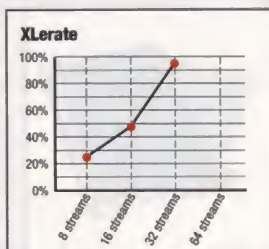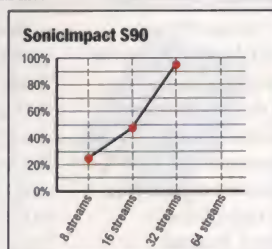
PERFORMANCE RATING	60%	60%	72%	90%
VALUE	77%	75%	83%	90%
PROS	Cheap	Good software bundle/WaveBlaster upgradable for music	Good all-rounder for games/music	Surprisingly good 3D performance
CONS	Not a great bundle	Expensive for a Vortex card	3D acceleration not as good as Vortex 2	Basic bundle

don't (such as Guillemot, the maker of the only ISA card in the test) will have them early this year.

When it comes to choosing a card that's ideal for gaming, you need one that can handle multiple DirectSound3D 'audio streams' adequately. Each distinct, positioned sound effect uses an audio stream. So if you have a scene with monsties and gunfire, vehicle noise and the full monty popping up over the soundstage, the more streams you have, the better. Cards which feature hardware acceleration of 3D audio basically perform the calculations for a certain number of streams with 'help' from the sound card itself. Most cheaper 3D audio cards do

> **❝If you have a scene with monsties and gunfire, the more audio streams you have the better❞**

this for only eight streams; the more expensive may support a larger number of hardware-accelerated streams, say 16 or 32. Also, bear in mind that levels of hardware support vary from chipset to chipset on the sound card. For example: though the original Vortex chipset (used by the Diamond Sonic Impact S90 and Terratec XLerate cards reviewed here) from Aureal claims eight hardware-accelerated streams, the level of on-chip acceleration is very low – there's still a significant load on your CPU for these eight streams. However, in contrast, the Vortex 2 chipset (used in the Diamond MX300) supports 16 accelerated streams with almost no load on your main CPU at all.
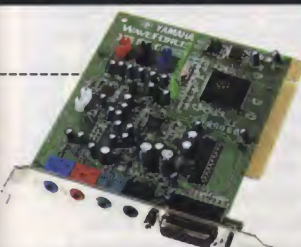
When your card uses up its allocation of hardware-accelerated streams, additional 3D audio streams are handed over to your CPU. So if your game wants to use 16 streams, the first eight will take very little CPU time, but the last eight considerably more. And in order not to see a massive slow-down, you need a powerful PC to handle this.

BEST ALL-ROUND

BEST PERFORMER

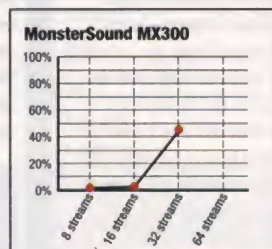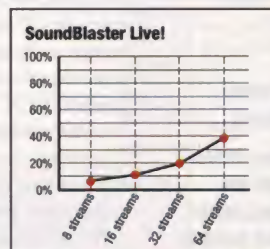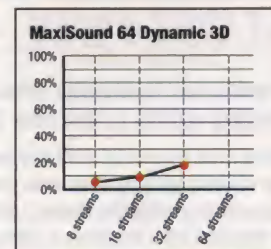| Yamaha	Diamond	Creative Labs	Guillemot
WaveForce WF192XG	MonsterSound MX300	SoundBlaster Live!	MaxiSound 64 Dynamic 3D
£59	£69	£149	£41
PCI	PCI	PCI	ISA
Yamaha YMF724C-V	Aureal Vortex 2 AU8830A2	EMU10K1-EBF	Dream SAM9407
8	16	32	N/A
No	Yes	Yes	Yes
DS3D, Sensaura, A3D (emulated)	DS3D, A3D 2.0	DS3D, A3D (emulated), EAX	DS3D
Line in, Mic in, Line out, Speaker out, Game/MIDI	Mic in, Line out, Rear/Headphone out, Game/MIDI	Line in, Mic in, Line out, Rear out, Game/MIDI out; breakout spine has MIDI in/out, S/P-DIF in/out and Digital Speaker Out	Mic in, Line out, Rear out, Line in, Speaker out, Game/MIDI
CD-Audio in, TAD in, Aux in, Video in	CD-Audio in, Modem in, Aux in, WaveBlaster daughterboard connector, MX-Link connector	CD-Audio in, TAD in, Aux in, Video in, I2S digital in, CD S/P-DIF in	CD-Audio in
2Mb GM/GS/XG, uses system RAM, 64 voices + 128 software	4Mb GM, uses system RAM, 320 voices	2, 4 or 8Mb GM/GS, uses system RAM 570-plus voices	2Mb GM/GS, uses dedicated RAM
Win 95/98/NT4, P120 (PII 233MHz for Sondius XG), 32Mb RAM	Win 95/98/NT4, P90, 8Mb RAM (16 rec)	Win 95/98, P133, 16Mb RAM	Win 3.1/95/98, 486DX/2, 8Mb RAM
Chorus, Reverb, Variations	Chorus, Reverb	Chorus, Reverb, Flange, Echo etc, 3D	Chorus, Reverb, Flange etc, 3D
YStation 32, S-YXG50 softsynth, XGWorks Lite, Classic 100, MIDIPlug, SoundVQ, Tiny Wave Editor	Midisoft Internet Bar, Midisoft Recording Studio, MusicMatch JukeBox	Unreal, SoundForge XP, Cubasis, Mixman Studio, Creative utility set	Maxi Digital Rack, Cakewalk Express, Internet Phone
N/A	3 years	2 years	1 year
Yamaha, 01908 366700, www.waveforce.com	Diamond, 0118 944 4400, www.diamondmm.co.uk	Creative Labs, 01245 265265, www.sblive.com	Memsolve, 0345 413 6543, www.guillemot.com
25%	1%	7%	5%
37%	2%	11%	9%
	45%	20%	18%
		39%	
Maxed out before 32 streams	Maxed out before 64 streams; scores so high on performance because up to 16 streams shows almost no CPU overhead		Results are academic, as audio break-up due to ISA bus meant sound was unusable after a few streams opened

WaveForce WF192XG

100% 80% 60% 40% 20% 0% — 8 streams, 16 streams, 32 streams, 64 streams

MonsterSound MX300

100% 80% 60% 40% 20% 0% — 8 streams, 16 streams, 32 streams, 64 streams

SoundBlaster Live!

100% 80% 60% 40% 20% 0% — 8 streams, 16 streams, 32 streams, 64 streams

MaxiSound 64 Dynamic 3D

100% 80% 60% 40% 20% 0% — 8 streams, 16 streams, 32 streams, 64 streams
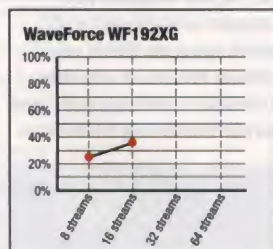
55%	90%	92%	35%
70%	95%	80%	65%
Excellent for music	Excellent price/performance	Good performance, good bundle, powerful for music and games	Cheap, good for music
Not as good for gaming	Slows down above 16 streams	Expensive	ISA card not great for 3D audio

SPEAKERS

Get yourself a decent set of speakers to make sure that new sound card delivers...

It's a truism that no matter how spankadelic your sound card, if you have crap speakers the final results will be less than desirable. An obvious point, perhaps, but what you may not realise is that 3D audio is more demanding of speakers than conventional stereo. A lot of HRTF information that our brain decodes relies on speakers having crystal-clear sound, rock-solid phase accuracy and a very broad frequency range. So those £40 grey plastic jobbies just aren't good enough.

When you're buying speakers, shop around very carefully. Sub-woofer/ satellite combinations are appealing, but make sure the satellite speakers are meaty enough: if all the bass comes out of the sub-woofer, you won't get any positional information when a boomy explosion occurs.

In ZONE's opinion, the best speaker system we've come across all year is the VideoLogic Scirocco set-up – unbelievably loud, crisp, and a bargain at £235. (It may sound a lot of money, but the set-up actually consists of five amps and three speakers made to hi-fi standards – you get what you pay for.) And while you're at it, you can use your old speakers for the rear channel if you have a sound card with two outputs.

As a rule of thumb, you need to match the card to your CPU power. For Pentiums, the best bet is a card like the Diamond MX300 which runs up to 16 streams with almost no drain on the CPU – but you pay more for this privilege. For slower PIIs and Celerons, up to around 333MHz, you should go for cards like the SoundBlasters or SonicStorm Pro, which offer a good compromise between acceleration and price. If you have a fast PII, then it's basically down to price alone. If you have the money, go for a better card, but if you want to keep costs down you can opt for a cheaper card and still get good results.

Take a close look at the graphs in the table on page 112. The vertical scale shows the percentage of CPU power used when playing back the number of 3D audio streams shown along the bottom. The less CPU power the card uses, the better: you can run multiple audio streams with the minimum slow-down.

Three cards are clear winners here: the two Creative Labs offerings and the new Diamond Monster Sound MX300. The Creative ones show a fairly linear increase in CPU overhead

> **Audio technology for PCs is rapidly accelerating beyond the simple days of SoundBlaster Pro cards – and that can only be good for gamers**

as the number of audio streams is increased; the latter uses almost no CPU power (less than two per cent) when playing back up to 16 streams – though it takes a leap after that, as it accelerates only the first 16 streams in hardware: then it's down to your CPU. The cards based on the first Vortex chipset show how little hardware acceleration is actually occurring, even for just eight streams. Similarly, the Yamaha card, designed primarily for musicians, shows limitations.

The MaxiSound 64 Dynamic 3D is a bit of a ringer here – it's the only ISA

card, it's relatively ancient, and it's included for reference only. The graph appears to show good performance, but in reality the ISA bus causes stuttering of audio after only a few channels are open, rendering it useless. The Dream chipset is powerful, hence the low CPU overhead, but the bus can't compete with PCI. All the other cards showed little stuttering, even with 64 streams playing simultaneously. There are many other older cards which use the same Dream chipset (other MaxiSound boards and Terractec's EWS64 series) which show similar problems. However, don't write off those manufacturers – they all have PCI cards in development that should be much better for gamers.

Worth mentioning here is the fact that Creative Labs are once again trying to corner the market, with a proprietary technology known as Environmental Audio Xtensions (EAX). This is an extension of DirectSound3D, and basically enables developers to include more sonic texture and reflections to sounds in real time, specifically those characterised by the environment of the game. For example: the same

sound is different in a metal tunnel from how it is in a field, and EAX simulates this. For this reason the Live! becomes an even more desirable option – those games that currently have EAX support (*Unreal*, for example) sound fantastic. Let's hope other manufacturers can get involved, otherwise Creative could once more have it their own way...

IT'S NOT JUST A GAME
This review concentrates on gaming performance, but you may have other considerations as well. For example, many of the cards have a TAD connector internally, which enables them to be connected to your modem for telephony. In this case, they use a feature of the sound card known as 'duplex' operation – the card can both play and record digital audio at the same time, enabling conversations over a phone line. All the cards here are full duplex. This feature is also used by games that enable you to trade audio insults in multiplayer mode.

For music, there are a host of other considerations – see the Music panel (right) for more information. You may find a compromise between gaming performance and musicality is a necessary evil, depending on the weight you place on each activity.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS
At the moment, DirectSound3D is flavour of the month. But there are many other technologies that Microsoft are active in developing and promoting, including DirectMusic. Many of the issues are well beyond the scope of this feature, but a few aspects are worth mentioning.

Many sound cards support DLS (DownLoadable Sounds) – these are typically musical instruments for use by the music synthesiser on the card. However, DLS can also include sound effects in games. Certain developers have already made use of DLS – Bullfrog in *Dungeon Keeper*, for example. Since the synth engine on the sound card usually uses little in the way of CPU power, this is an additional source of sound effects that doesn't tax your CPU. In addition, it may remove the need to spool music from the CD in digital format – high-quality orchestral sound can be reproduced using DLS, as opposed to General MIDI. And as more devices become available that use the USB (Universal Serial Bus) on modern PCs, many digital processes which are at present the domain of high-end audio cards may make it to desktop PCs, especially as CPUs increase in power.

What's certain is that audio technology for PCs is rapidly accelerating beyond the simple days of SoundBlaster Pro cards – and that can only be good for gamers. **PCZ**

Half-Life is even better with a decent card.

THE CARDS THAT GOT AWAY

ZONE looks into its speccy crystal ball to divulge which new sound cards we should be looking out for in the near future

No matter what time of year we decided to sit down and write this feature, there were bound to be a few cards that we couldn't get hold of in time. Though the Diamond Monster Sound MX300 is the only one using the Vortex 2 chipset, expect a few other cards with similar specs any time now. And from a quick chat to some of the manufacturers who supplied cards for the review, expect some serious competitors early this year – from Terratec and VideoLogic, for example.

Special mention must go to Guillemot, who have already announced that their Isis card will be launched early next year. It's the company's first PCI offering, aimed squarely at musicians, but the spec sheet suggests that it may well be a goodie for gamers too. *PC ZONE* will be reviewing the card as soon as we get our mitts on it.

COMPUTER SHOPPER

Stuck on a game? Tense, nervous headache? Those funny little spots come back? Cheer up, here comes the *PC ZONE* team, all dressed like Lester Piggott and thundering into view atop their mighty chargers...

YOUR HOSTS

Warren Chrismas	Keith Pullin	Adam Phillips
Steve Hill	Phil Wand	Richard Crook

CHEAT MASTER

Once again we've scoured every corner of the PC games world for the latest cheats and dastardly deeds. Have fun

● **CHEATMEISTER** Keith Pullin

Tomb Raider III: stop thinking what you're thinking, and try some cheats instead.

ON THE CD

We've got over 1200 games tips and solutions squeezed on to this month's CD. Check out the Editorial section of your CD-ROM browser to track them down

NEED HELP?

If your problem's game-related, get organised and...

WRITE TO Dear Keith/CheatMaster, *PC ZONE*, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ

EMAIL letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk
with '**Dear Keith**' or '**CheatMaster**' in the subject line.

SHOGO
Microids
Press 'T' (or whatever you've mapped the 'say' action to) to access the chat mode and type in 'mpkfa' for all weapons. If that's not enough for you, type 'mpgod' to access God mode.

TOMB RAIDER III
Eidos Interactive
At last, we've finally tracked down some cheats to stop you lot getting Lara's knickers in a twist.

Level skip
1 Draw pistols
2 Take one step back
3 Take one step forward
4 Duck and stand
5 Spin three rounds
6 Jump forward

All weapons
1 Draw pistols
2 Take one step back
3 Take one step forward
4 Duck and stand
5 Spin three rounds
6 Jump backwards

TEST DRIVE 5
Electronic Arts
Go to the first options screen and type these high-speed, high-thrill factor codes:

cup of choice	Unlock all tournament races
that takes me back	Enable backwards mode
i have the key	Unlock all cars and tracks

Other cheat codes:
These cheats won't work unless you have an entry on the high-score screen, so make sure you have the checkpoints turned on (you can do this from the options menu).

Knacked	Reverse tracks
whoooosh	Nitros (press the horn button to activate)
mjcim.rc	Remote-control cars
sausage	Bonus cars

NB: After entering the codes, make sure you save your game, otherwise you have to go through the entire cheat process again next time you load it.

Also, watch out when using the nitro code – you spin out unless you're in second gear or higher.

CAESAR III
Sierra Studios
If you need more money, or want to skip a certain mission, try this: right-click on a Well, and press Alt and 'K' together to turn on the cheat mode. To achieve instant victory, simply hit Alt and 'V' together. To give yourself more money, hit Alt and 'C' together (although this only works if you have less than 5000 DN). Enjoy!

UPRISING
Ubi Soft
A few months back we printed some codes for this game. However, new ones have come to our attention, so here you are. Just press 'M', type the code, then hit Return.

stormy	Rainy
way mo money	+5000 credits
slick	Die
done	Win scenario
yoyo	Invincible
clearsky	Clear
flurry	Snow

DETHKARZ
Ocean
Okay, it's a little-known game, but it's still pretty good. Press and hold Shift, Ctrl and 'C' on

the main menu to activate the cheat mode screen. On this screen type one of the following:

GLOBAL Open up all tracks
DEV 6 Choose from all cars available
RACE CORPS All seasons can be selected in Championship mode

G-NOME
7th Level
Once again, we've printed cheats for this in the past, but we've never seen these ones before. On the mission computer press Ctrl and F1 together. Now enter one or more of the following *case-sensitive* codes. When you enter a correct code, it is confirmed with a beep.

Redtop Trod Access all missions on the mission menu
Mother Mourn Us Change mountain on missions 1-5 to Mt Rushmore with programmers' faces
Chaste Coed View end game sequence
O'Sarge Give Sergeant in training missions an Irish accent
Swiss Throat Change citadel building into 7th Level headquarters
A Mere Fart Fart
A Scramble On Take screenshots by pressing Shift, Ctrl, and right mouse click
Range Goes Gory Access all levels and other goodies
Dunk It Here Sound session out-takes
Horny Elk Leer Activate all targets on radar key
Half Libel Activate teleport key
Had A Nude On Activate invincibility key
Brass Clue Activate infinite ammo key
Rotted Drop Activate destroy target
Oh No! Less Japan Activate ion strike key

In-game cheats:
Ctrl+I Invincibility
Ctrl+P All targets on radar
Ctrl+X Ion strike
Ctrl+Z Ammo refills
Ctrl+F Destroy current target
Ctrl+B Teleport behind target

HERETIC 2
Activision
The magic squiggly line (~) key takes you into the console and enables you to type in the following codes for some hectic cheats:

Playbetter God mode on/off
twoweeks Power-up on/off

meatwagon Kill all non-boss monsters
victor Kill all monsters (including BOSS)
Angermonsters Monsters get angry
crazymonsters Monsters out for blood
kiwi Clipping on/off
showcoords Show coordinates
weapprev Select previous weapon
weapnext Select next weapon
The following items can be gained by typing 'spawn <item>', where <item> is one of the following item names. Pretty self-explanatory, really.
item_weapon_firewall
item_weapon_maceballs
item_weapon_magicmissile
item_weapon_phoenixbow
item_weapon_redrain_bow
item_weapon_sphereofannihilation
item_defense_meteorbarrier
item_defense_polymorph
item_defense_powerup
item_defense_ringofrepulsion
item_defense_shield

item_defense_teleport
item_health_full
item_health_half
item_mana_combo_half
item_mana_combo_quarter
item_mana_defensive_full
item_mana_defensive_half
item_mana_offensive_full
item_mana_offensive_half
item_puzzle_canyonkey
item_puzzle_cloudkey
item_puzzle_cog
item_puzzle_crystal
item_puzzle_dungeonkey
item_puzzle_highpriestesskey
item_puzzle_highpriestesssymbol
item_puzzle_hive2amulet
item_puzzle_hive2gem
item_puzzle_hive2spear
item_puzzle_minecartwheel
item_puzzle_ore
item_puzzle_plazacontainer
item_puzzle_potion
item_puzzle_refinedore
item_puzzle_shield
item_puzzle_slumcontainer
item_puzzle_tavernkey

item_puzzle_tome
item_puzzle_townkey

WCW/NITRO
T*HQ Games
To enable all the wrestlers, perform the following moves in the specified order during a match. You should hear a selection sound in the background to let you know that the cheat has been entered correctly.

1 Evade four times
2 Block four times
3 Tag four times
4 Taunt four times
5 Press Help once

OUTPOST 2
Sierra
If you want to increase the building speed, click rapidly on a building while it's manufacturing or researching. Ultimately this increases the speed of the process.

DEAR KEITH

New year, new problems. Life holds no surprises for *Keith Pullin*

HEAVENLY BABY
Q My ten-month-old baby and I are playing *Grim Fandango*, and we're not doing too badly considering one of us can't even speak. Still, with a lot of pointing and gurgling we've managed to reach Max's Casino in Rubacava, and now find ourselves in the kitchen with a stroppy French waiter. We've trapped him in the walk-in fridge and can go no further. A large wine keg in the corner seems to be the way out of here (to the cellar, I presume), but how do we get in it? Please help, as I want to complete this before my son's eighteenth birthday!
Nina and Louis, Bournemouth
A You're going to kick yourself. Climb the ladder, and use the can opener to open the barrel, slip inside and wait until the demon guarding the elevator moves the barrel (with you inside) down to the cellar. You should be okay from there.
Remember: if you get stuck again, rub your baby's tummy for good luck. He'll burp words of wisdom.

FISHY PROBLEM
Q I have a new fishing game called *Bass Masters Classic: Tournament Edition*. I'm not sure where I'm going wrong, but I can't catch any fish. I can't hook them – when 'Strike!' appears on the screen the fish immediately escape. The instruction manual says push the mouse down to hook the fish, but I've done that and nothing happens. Fishing is meant to be peaceful – it's not in my house. Please help.
Peter Partridge, Bury St Edmonds

A Hmmm. I seem to remember a similar experience. The way I got round it was by pushing up, then down on the mouse very quickly and very sharply. Happy fishing.

KNIGHTS OF WONDER
Q Have you played a game called *Knights And Merchants*? I have, and I'm stuck on the third mission – I don't make enough soldiers to defend myself. How can I make them quicker?
Richard Lerchant, Newhaven
A There are two distinct parts to this mission. The first sees you defending a ford with very few soldiers. Here it's simply a case of positioning your militia and axeman at the front, with the bowmen at the rear. This formation should see off the invading force and give you enough time to breed some pigs so you can make leather armour and create more lancers and bowmen for the final showdown. Away, brave knight…

SNEAKY LIFT?
Q I'm stuck on *SiN*. My problem is getting through the SinTEK chemical laboratory in Episode 2. I'm trying to sneak through the building but I keep setting off the alarms. I also need to find a pass for the lift. All in all I'm in a spot of bother, so any information you can give will be greatly appreciated.
Lucas March, Shirley
A I'm receiving a lot of letters about this level. Which is bizarre, because it's not difficult. So, for all those suffering, try this: Kill the receptionist so she doesn't raise the alarm. Sneak up the main corridor, ducking as you go, and take the second corridor on

your left. Continue along, ducking under the next set of windows, and take a left at the end. Go through the door on your left. Kill the guy in the locker room to find the elevator key. Sneak back to the elevator, and Bob's your uncle. I now refuse to answer any more questions on this. If you're stuck, use the walkthrough in *PC ZONE* issue 72. Got that?

A LEGGY PROBLEM
Q I am completely into *War Of The Worlds*. I love it! Unfortunately I find myself getting overrun very quickly. Surely this can't be right? Is there a way to avoid this initial invasion by the Martians?
Patrick Gillies, Edinburgh
A Incredible, you've missed the entire point of the game. Well, Patrick, unfortunately this is just the way it is. Try to be patient. If you hang in there the Martians eventually halt their advance, giving you time to consolidate and form your own army. My advice is to not give up so easily.

THE CAT'S OUT THE BAG
Q I'm stuck on *Shogo* on the Maritropa Slums B level. Some woman is asking for a cat and I don't know where it is. Can you help me?
Fletcher Williams, Chichester
A You need to go back to the Lost Cat level (couldn't work that out?) and explore round there. You come across some guards who hold a squeaky toy. Kill the guards and use the squeaky toy on the lost cat near the end of the level to make the pussy come with you. Now give the cat back to the woman and she opens the electric gate on your left.

GRIM FANDANGO

WALKTHROUGH – PART 2

Can you do the Fandango? You can now, thanks to *Steve Hill*

● **REVIEWED** *PCZ* #71 **SCORE** 90%

A s we explained in Part One of our walkthrough last issue when we took you through the first two years, *Grim Fandango* is essentially comprised of puzzles. We've provided the basic solutions to these puzzles, and the order in which you attempt them is fairly arbitrary; some can even be worked on simultaneously. Good luck, enjoy the trip, and tell them we sent you.

ESCAPE PORT

The red button controls the dock-side anchor.

YEAR THREE

ESCAPE PORT

Hit the button on the far left of the room to pull up the ocean-side anchor, and the red button on the far right of the room to pull up the dock-side anchor. Then:
● Grab the levers near the middle of the room and turn to the right – you should get a shot of the ship away from the dock.
● Put down the levers and hit the dock-side anchor button to drop it.
● Grab the levers again and turn to the left – you should now get a shot of the ship next to the dock with the dock-side anchor down.
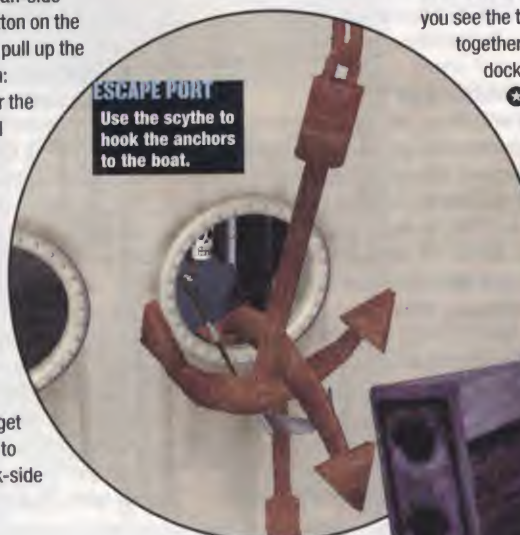
● Put down the levers and hit the ocean-side anchor button to drop it.
● Grab the levers again and turn to the right – you should get a

shot of the ship away from the dock with the ocean-side anchor hooked on to the dock-side anchor on the ocean floor.
● Put down the levers and hit the dock-side anchor to pull it up – you see the two anchors hooked together come up on the dock side.
● Use the scythe on the anchors: this hooks them on to the porthole.
● Hit the ocean-side anchor to pull both anchors along

ESCAPE PORT
Use the scythe to hook the anchors to the boat.

the bottom of the ship, which tears it in half.
● Grab the levers again and pull back to put the engines into reverse.

GET TO LIGHT

Talk to Chepito, the gimp with the lantern. As soon as he tries to leave, look at his lantern and grab it. Turn towards Glottis, who takes Chepito and his lantern.

● Grab hold of Chepito's lantern and turn to Glottis.

SNEAK ON SUB

Walk along the crater to the far side, where there's a barnacle-infested rock. Walk around the rock until Chepito gets stuck in the barnacles. You end up at the front of a large underwater building. Walk inside the elevator airlock. Walk straight out of the elevator, then turn right along the walkway, past the big vault door and into the Ashtray Room. Walk through the other door, into Domino's Room.

● Walk past the rock and Chepito gets entangled in the barnacles. The tit.

FIND GUN

Meche is smoking a cigarette and using a stand-up ashtray next to her desk. If you move the ashtray slightly, she flicks ash on to her stockings, which she then removes and flings into the bin. Take these to Chepito, who will trade them for a gun. Give the gun to Meche.

● Meche slips off a stocking. Easy, tiger.

GET POWER CHISEL

To get Meche out of the vault, you need Chepito's power chisel. Talk to the angelitos. Tell them that you really want to help, and when they ask why you don't come into the cage with them, tell them you don't have the tools. One of them throws a tiny hammer at you – give it to Chepito.

● Talk to the angelitos about their tiny tools.

OPEN VAULT

Use the power chisel on the door jamb of the vault, which

exposes the tumblers. Spin the wheel clockwise until the top tumbler's flat spot lines up with the door jamb, then spin it anti-clockwise to line up the second tumbler, then clockwise to line up the third tumbler, then anti-clockwise to line up the bottom tumbler. Then use the scythe on the tumblers to lock them into place, and pull the door handle to open the door.

⊕ Lay into the vault door using the power chisel.

OPEN SECRET VAULT

Close the big door to the outside, and you see a gold electric terminal on the back of the door. Touch this with the scythe and it completes an electric circuit, opening a secret door into a secret vault, where Meche is.

⊕ Use your trusty scythe to create a short circuit.

ESCAPE SECRET VAULT

Poke your scythe at the sprinklers. Turn the sprinkler system valve. If you turn it off, you can see the water seep away into the floor. Take the broadaxe from the front vault, drag it to the back vault, and drop it onto the area where the water drains away.

⊕ Watch where the water drains away, then drop an axe on it. Obviously.

GET TO ANCHOR

Climb up onto the huge crane and drive it over to the other side of the island. Get off the crane, go down the conveyor and then past the lever into the next room. Go past the anchor, where Glottis is working on the Lamancha, which is hanging on the Edge of the

World. To drag it up to the beach, go back to the crane, drive it back to the beach, drop the crane onto the beach, get off the crane and use the power chisel on it to detach it from the chain. This lets the chain and boom fly loose, wrecking the boom, leaving only the chain. Drive the crane back to the other side of the beach. Let the chain down, get off the crane and walk down the conveyor. Make sure that the conveyor is moving away from the surface of the water (flip the lever if necessary) and the chain heads towards the anchor. Go back to the lever and flip it so that the conveyor is moving towards the water surface; the chain pulls away from the anchor but starts coiling up on the conveyor. Flip the lever again so that the conveyor is moving away from the water surface; the coiled chain moves towards

the anchor and hooks on to it. Go back up to the crane and pull the chain up.

⊕ Go at it with the power chisel.

GET PAST CORAL

They've got a ship now, but they need to find a way to get past the big coral reef that's out in the deeper water. Glottis figures those huge crushers would work. Get back into the crane and drop the chain onto the crushers then pull it back out. It rips the crushers out of their sockets and Glottis rigs them to the front of the Lamancha.

GET TO ANCHOR
Here's Glottis...

This is the last you'll see of Domino.

⊕ Use this crane to do loads of clever stuff.

DOMINO KOMBAT

Domino returns all your attacks with force and you keep getting thrown down. Use your scythe on the eye of the octopus, which makes it swim away. Domino

gets really mad now, pushes Manny down again and starts yelling at him. Then the Lamancha comes cruising up, with its big set of crushers in front. Simply sit back and watch.

➔

⊖ Hey, nice threads, Manny. Can I have the name of your tailor?

DOMINO COMBAT

Stab the octopus in the eye, you daft twat.

DOMINO COMBAT

← **YEAR FOUR**

FIND FUEL

Walk all the way to the bottom of the temple and open the coffin. Bruno throws the coffee mug full of packing material at you and stomps off. The packing material can be used as fuel, since it becomes explosive when mixed with the magnesium fire extinguishers, which the mechanical demons have.

⊕ **Open the coffin and Bruno throws a mug at you.**

PROVE FUEL

Put the coffee mug on the mug rack in the kitchen. Take a clean rag out of the drawer, dip it into the barrel of oil outside the kitchen, then put the oily rag in the toaster. The mechanics come in and put it out with their magnesium fire extinguisher, which hits the coffee mug full of packing material and sends it flying around the kitchen at top speed. The mechanics now know what they have to do.

DEFUSE DOMIBOMB

Go to the Scrimshaw shop and get the liquid nitrogen from the cabinet. Go to the docks where Velasco is still hanging around. When he hears that the Lamancha has been found, Velasco takes off in search of it. Take the ship in a bottle and go to the Blue Casket kitchen, where there's a huge barrel full of coffin-shooter mix. Fill up the bottle and give it to Glottis, telling him it's 'Lumbago Lemonade'. Glottis loves it, so much so that he goes to the Blue Casket and drinks the whole barrel of it, and throws his guts all over the floor of the garage. Pour the liquid nitrogen on the floor and it freezes over. Now you can defuse the bomb.

⊕ **Glottis throws his ring up violently.**

DIFFUSE DOMIBOMB

The Bone Wagon has a bomb attached to it.

DEFUSE DOMIBOMB
The mechanics put the fire out.

ANTAGONISE FLORIST

You need to get the florist out of Hector's tower so you can convince him to work for the good guys. You can use Hector's note (the one where Hector threatens to come sprout Manny himself) to scare the florist. You need a way to get the note to the florist. First give the note to the carrier pigeon hanging out at the new LSA headquarters. Then take the photo of the dead agent out of the bin and show it to the pigeon, who immediately takes off in search of the agent in the photo. The agent's body is still in the florist's office, so the pigeon goes right to the florist.
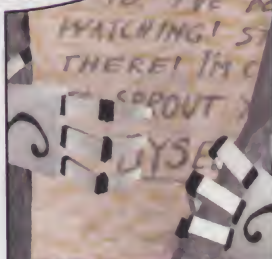
⊕ **This is the note that must be sent to the florist.**

FIND FLORIST

The florist, Bowlsley, runs off through the sewers, but he leaves a trail of sproutella that leaked from one of the cans. Pick up the severed arm left behind from the agent that Salvador chopped in

half, then go down into the sewers and up one of the ladders to a corridor, where you can climb another ladder and get to the backstage area of Johnny Thunder's musical review. Climb up some scaffolding and find a grinder. Stick the severed arm in the grinder, then take the grinder with the severed arm in it and go back to the sewers where the sproutella trail starts. On the way there, take the remote control for the Bone Wagon from Glottis. Grind some of the arm onto the sproutella, where it sprouts into a trail of baby tears that you can actually follow. Glottis follows in the Bone Wagon.

⊕ **Help yourself to a spare arm.**

⊕ **Use the bone grinder on the sproutella to follow Bowlsley.**

GET TO FLORIST

Manny and Glottis follow the trail to a store front of a flower shop, where they figure Bowlsley must be. They're about to emerge out of the sewers when the big sewer monster, a huge white alligator demon that they've been hearing, suddenly appears out of nowhere, blocking their path. Use the remote control that you took from Glottis to jack up the Bone Wagon, then drive forward towards the alligator demon, which just pushes it back. Jump onto the ledge, walk over to the ladder and start climbing down towards the store front. At a certain point on the way down the ladder you get chased back up by the alligator demon. Go down the ladder just far enough

to get the alligator demon's attention, then lower the Bone Wagon onto it with the remote control, thus trapping the albinizod.

↑ Trap the demon using the remote control.

GET GUN

Manny can get into the florist's shop now, but Bowlsley is still freaked out and thinks that Manny has been sent by Hector to kill him. Bowlsley has a mental problem, where the contradictions between his life as a florist and his afterlife as a corpse that hates flowers have driven him mad. Bowlsley used to have a flower shop in real life and is now trying to replicate it. There's a little bell on the inside of the shop door, but it's covered in tape. Use the scythe to remove the tape. Leave the shop and come back in. The bell rings, turning on a switch in Bowlsley's head so he thinks he's a florist again. Manny asks for a can of sproutella and a gun, and the florist gives it to him happily.

↑ Your trusty scythe comes in handy once more.

DISGUISE FACE

Now Manny needs to meet up with Meche in Hector's casino, but he won't go up there without some sort of disguise. Manny can get to the sewers underneath the theatre where Johnny Thunder's Musical Review is playing. Climb up the ladder from the sewer, where a couple of Thunderboys are talking. If you ask them about joining up they say you missed the audition.

There's a pot of coffee nearby, and some scaffolding that you can climb up above the Thunderboys. Take the pot of coffee, climb up the scaffolding, and pour the coffee onto one of the Thunderboys, ruining his make-up and his budding Thunderboy career. Go down the stairs backstage where they do the make-up, and they ask if you

want to be a Thunderboy. Manny re-emerges with his brand new Thunderboy make-up.

↑ Help yourself to coffee.

GET FANCY CLOTHES

Manny can go into the casino now without fear of being recognised, so he goes in and finds Meche hanging with Chowchilla Charlie at the slot machines. Meche says that Hector is having a party upstairs in his tower and they'll need to get some party clothes to sneak into it. The one-armed agent is also there, and has chosen to disguise himself in a trenchcoat while riding a unicycle.

The one-armed agent is wriggling his way into the slot machines and grabbing all the money inside. Manny needs to find a way to get Charlie away from his slot machine so he can get his clothes. Meche has a toga sheet that she's been trying to use on Charlie to convince him to go to an imaginary toga party, but she hasn't had any luck getting him away from the slot machine. He says he'll leave when his slot machine pays off. Throw the sheet on top of Charlie and then get the one-armed agent to come to Charlie's slot machine and do his trick. The money comes out. Charlie thinks he's hit the jackpot and agrees to go to the party with Meche. He goes into the bathroom and changes out of his suit and into the toga sheet. Manny can now go into the bathroom and change into Charlie's suit, and he and Meche head towards the elevator to go upstairs.

↑ Throw a sheet over Charlie Chowchilla.

GET UPSTAIRS

The elevator demon won't let anyone upstairs unless they can answer a personal question about

Hector LeMans. The answer to the question is actually the last keno number that shows up on the big keno board in the casino. Just tell him this number and the demon lets you go upstairs to Hector's.

↑ The answer is behind you.

IMPRESS HECTOR

Celso and his wife are at Hector's. Hector has been trying to convince them to buy a Number Nine ticket, but they have decided to be frugal and not spend their money on this. Convince them to spend the money on the tickets by telling them about your danger-fraught travels. They go to Hector and tell him they've changed their minds; he asks them why, and they point to Manny. Hector then offers you a job.

JUMP BUILDINGS

Hector has jumped onto the kicking leg of the giant neon lady. He manages to jump to the next building, spilling the contents of

JUMP BUILDINGS
Fill that crack.

DISGUISE FACE
A couple of ponces mincing about talking rubbish.

his suitcase in the process. He hangs on the ledge of the building for a few seconds, then falls to the street below. The motor powering the neon lady's kicking leg burns out under Hector's weight; her leg is now stuck, pointing down. Manny could slide down the leg but it ends too low for him to get onto the next building. Her arm is resting on a cracked cement gargoyle. Use the arm in the grinder on the crack in the gargoyle to sprinkle some ground-up bone into the crack, then dribble some sproutella out of the sproutella can you got from the florist. The flowers and shrubbery break open the gargoyle, dislodging the giant neon lady's hand and causing the entire structure to fall backwards. Now the end of her leg is high enough for Manny to be able to slide down the leg and jump to the next building, grabbing the suitcase full of tickets.

COUNTERACT SPROUTELLA

Manny's been shot with a sproutella dart; he can't do anything until he finds a way to counter it. Use the liquid nitrogen you're still carrying from Rubacava on the wound to freeze it up.

↑ Liquid nitrogen saves the day.

IMPRESS HECTOR

Use your salesman technique to flog a ticket.

GET GUN FROM TRUNK

Now Manny needs to get the gun that's in the trunk of the car to shoot Hector, but he doesn't have the key. Talk to Sal, who explains that the key is on his sprouted body. Open up the suitcase full of tickets and one, apparently belonging to Sal, floats out and towards his head. Pick it up and take it to the meadow behind the greenhouse, where it is drawn towards Sal's body. Use the scythe on the plot of ground below the hovering ticket, where you find Sal's body and the key to the trunk of the car.

↑ The Talking Heads re-form.

SPROUT HECTOR

Hector is holed up in the greenhouse and there's no apparent way to get at him. There's a water tank nearby that Hector uses to water the plants in the greenhouse. Take the sproutella gun and shoot the water tank with it. The sproutella from the gun mixes with the water in the tank, and then it all goes into the greenhouse where it sprays down onto the plants, and onto Hector, killing him. Serves him right, the dirty bastard. **PCZ**

↑ Shoot the water tank and it's all over.

SETTLERS III

EVERYTHING YOU WANTED TO KNOW

Stuck on *Settlers III*? Richard Crook knows a thing or two to help you on your way

⭐ REVIEWED *PCZ* #72 **SCORE** 88%

No matter which race you choose, be it Romans, Egyptians or Asians, *Settlers III* is a very complex and challenging game to master. You certainly won't get far by rushing in and making hasty decisions; careful planning and patience is the key to a thriving economy, which then enables you to expand and produce loads of troops to defend your territory. If you can get your basic industry working as fast as possible you can expand and mine minerals, and eventually produce iron bars, weapons, gold and tools. And don't worry about starting with plenty of weak soldiers, because when you've expanded you can build temples to upgrade them. So let's start with the first steps to getting your settlement on the right track.

While constructing your buildings, send out spies to see what lies further afield.

IT'S OFF TO WORK WE GO
Your economy is based on constructing the right buildings to produce the right products in the right quantities. It's about balancing what buildings to construct, and when and where to build them. There are four main types of building: resource, food, military and miscellaneous. You must keep in mind that the various races need wood and stone in different proportions as they have different architectural styles. For example, the Romans are well-balanced and need stone and wood in roughly equal amounts, whereas the Asians need considerably more wood than stone. Top

Building is time-consuming, so hit F12 to speed up the process.

BOOZE

Each race has its own way of producing alcohol: Egyptian breweries use more grain, while Roman wineries must be planted on a hill. Asian distilleries are trickier as you need both rice farms and distillery coal. Place rice farms in swampy areas and erect charcoal huts to produce more coal.

Once alcohol production has started, create a large temple and several small ones, all of which must be located close to the source of the alcohol. Once you begin sending the gods' favourite brew to the temple, the mana you receive in return can be used to either cast spells or promote soldiers, thus enabling you to upgrade your fighting skills.

1 promotion: 10 offerings of alcohol
2 promotions: 25 offerings of alcohol
3 promotions: 50 offerings of alcohol
4 promotions: 100 offerings of alcohol
5 promotions: 200 offerings of alcohol
6 promotions: 300 offerings of alcohol

Remember that when casting spells, the best – and only universal – spell is Gifts From The Heavens, which gives you an assortment of goodies in return for sacrifices. The return you receive is always greater than the cost, so make use of it.

The Romans' answer to the British booze cruise.

FOOD

Having expanded your borders, find room for a bakery, a waterworks, a grain farm and a grain mill to produce food to feed your miners.

Fish is the quickest food to obtain if your race is situated near the coast, in which case it's often a good idea to build a toolsmith and make a few extra fishing poles. As soon as the hut is built and populated, he should start fishing. If you can't build a hut close to water he'll sit there until you set a new area for him.

Bread takes slightly longer to make and you have to wait for your first grain harvest, after which you need a bakery, waterworks and a grain mill. Place the grain mill near your farm, the waterworks near a stream, and the bakery in the middle, as it needs both grain and water.

Ham also takes a while to produce, as you often need a second grain farm, a pig farm and then a slaughterhouse. Note: if the woodcutters have taken all your axes, you may need the assistance of the toolmaker to make you some more.

Your carriers don't need feeding at all.

Take a walk down Chinatown for the best fish.

tip: to speed up building construction, press F12.

Always build a woodcutter next to the trees, then construct a sawmill nearby. It's wise to build two woodcutters and a forester together to ensure you never run out of trees for your woodcutters. For a successful community you need lots of trees, so make sure you have multiples of these building groups (two woodcutters and one forester) all over your land. For every three of these groups you need a sawmill.

Next, look for grey rocks standing inside your borders and build one or two quarry huts near them; you can also change its working space with the multi-coloured sphere. Be careful though: once the rocks are gone from around the huts, your workers become idle and you run out of stone. Finally, make sure that you build additional quarry huts in other rock-infested areas when you expand your borders. It's advisable to send some soldiers out to scout for the best place to expand. Also, areas need to be flattened for such purposes as grain farms.

It's worth remembering that you can demolish a settler's residence when it's empty; you lose half the material, but it gives you another place to build if things are getting tight in terms of how much land you have left.

MANIC MINING

Construct your barracks as soon as possible so that you're prepared for any sudden attacks – remember that it's much easier to defend rather than launch an assault. Build an ore smelter, weaponry and then a barracks. Place them close together and near a mountain to gain extra coal and iron.

Next, get your geologists to explore the mountain regions. The information they come up with tells you exactly where you should build your mines. Even though you start with some coal and iron, you soon need more, and the location of your mines can win or lose you the game. Geologists put up signs showing one, two or three 'balls' – the more the better. A high-yield mine means that not only do you need less of them, you also don't have to produce as much food for the miners. It also gives you the luxury of producing minerals at a faster rate. Make sure that you cover as many 'three-ball' sites as possible when you place a mine, as there's no point in placing an iron mine on a coal deposit if you haven't found any iron yet. There are five kinds of mine in the game, most of which are self-explanatory. However, if it's a gold mine, remember that you need another coal mine to feed the smelter, as well as a storage bin to stockpile the gold. Each piece of gold adds a percentage to your

"Right, lads, I know you want to kick some ass, but let's sit down and think about the situation like civilised human beings, okay?"

SAFETY

Castles are extremely hard to build but make ideal defence systems – but don't build them too early on as they use up too many resources. Make sure you fill your towers with your strongest troops, as losing one is not only frustrating but also dangerous for your race. Place the healers near your castles or towers and send any red or yellow soldiers close by to restore their health.

It pays to have a few scouts roaming around. It's also a good idea not to attack the enemy until you've seen inside their camp (look at their buildings, towers and, most of all, their barracks and weaponry), as you never know how powerful they are. Enemy soldiers can see spies if they get too close, so be careful. Finally, you need a couple of healer's huts and a cannon, ballista or catapult hall (depending on which race you are). While these weapons are lethal against towers, they are slow-moving and vulnerable to enemy infantry. They can also be a strain on resources.

Egyptians' ballistas are quite accurate, so lay off the mummy jokes, alright?

A happy scene at a settlement, yesterday.

strength, as do gems and sulphur, depending on the race you have chosen. If you want to have unlimited space for your resources, transport them to a second island. You can then save your gold on the beach.

LET THE BATTLE COMMENCE

And finally, keep an eye on your economy at all times – it helps you predict what you need next, so build accordingly. And make sure that you have a steady stream of soldiers coming out of the barracks for when the inevitable attack comes. It means spending a couple of hours on town planning and financial management, but at least you'll be ready to participate in all-out war. ▣

CARMAGEDDON II: CARPOCALYPSE NOW

MISSION BY MISSION WALKTHROUGH

There's nothing like running over fat dogs and crushing mental patients against the wall with their own beds. *Keith Pullin* does all that and more as he too goes quickly round the bend

⊙ REVIEWED *PCZ* #69 **SCORE** 95%

Most of *Carmageddon II* is fairly straightforward, really – learn the tracks and kill an inordinate number of innocent civilians. However, it's not all foot to the floor and blood streaks on the door. The missions can cause problems, and it's mainly those stages we're concentrating on here. So belt up and get a grip.

GROUP 1
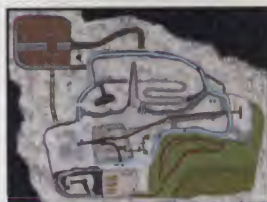
The first three races before the mission act as a warm-up. The other cars are lightweight, and pedestrians and animals are abundant. Explore, get used to the car, and remember: the more peds dead, the more time you get. Try to visit the bank – crashing into the vault rewards you with some top-quality gear. If you fancy practicing some high-speed manoeuvres, slip on to Beaver City's ample orbital.

Rocky Too is a sprawling level with masses of tricks to try. Extra Power enables you to push massive rocks on to other cars, and the Wall Climber makes your tyres stick to any surface – ceilings and all.

It won't take long to reach the Boulder Dash mission, and when you do, just take it easy. Tumbling over edges doesn't help time-wise, so just get round those bends. Try to aim for under a minute per lap. Oh, and you get no extra time for killing on missions, so don't bother.

⊙ Nip into the bank and deposit some debris.

GROUP 2

At first it seems that the antennae are impossible to reach. That's utter rubbish. Pick the Eagle Mk III (that's if you've accumulated enough credits to have a choice) and just follow the ramps – generally speaking they point in the right direction. Most jumps require a take-off speed of around 80mph. Hit the right rhythm, and bounce from one rooftop to the next like a rubber ball.

This mission teaches you a very important skill: the ability to control your jumping so you can land in very enclosed areas. As the game progresses, you find that of all the skills, this is by far the most important.

⊙ Hitting the rooftop ramps at the correct speed is imperative.

⊙ Simply drive into the antennae to destroy them.

GROUP 3

The Home Sweet Groan race takes place in Max's junkyard. In the middle of the stage is his home, and it's around here that you find plenty of contraptions with which to deliver swift death to your adversaries. Have fun, see who can be lured into Max's lair, and then nail 'em!

The race in the quarry can be precarious, as it's sometimes hard to find peds, and the other contestants bash you around quite badly. Try to make the most of the ample time bonuses, and power-ups lurking behind or on crates and boxes. Usually they're not too far from the actual circuit,

GROUP 1

Don't go overboard on the corners – nice and easy does it.

GROUP 3

Be inventive – try out different attacking strategies.

so taking a small diversion is often worth your while.

On the mission stage, loonies from a local mental home are on the loose. There are 22 patients in all, and you have to squish all of them. It's probably best to go for the larger groups first, and then pick up the stragglers later. We've marked their exact locations on the map, so it shouldn't be too much of a problem. As for those irritating nutters on the roof, just bounce up to them with Kangaroo power-ups or something similar.

🔾 Witness the patented 'crush-the-nutter-against-the-wall-with-his-own-bed' manoeuvre.

Go for the head-on collision and you should seriously hurt him. He'll probably head off into the junkyard after that, so follow him, grab as many useful power-ups as you can, and keep twatting the life out of him.

It's advisable to go for a vehicle other than the Eagle Mk III for all this, because the heavier the car, the more damage you inflict on your opponent. As long as you keep up a fairly relentless assault, the time limit shouldn't be a problem.

🔾 Get used to driving in snow. However, it's a shame there are no snow chains available.

GROUP 4
"Gotcha!" as Noel Edmonds would say. Ah, if only it were him.

GROUP 4

There are quite a few handy power-ups near the start to help you on this mission, but by far the best antidote to this little predicament is the Solid Granite Car. It should be lurking just outside the glass-fronted building near the start point.

When you've got it, head straight for the truck which should by now be charging directly for you at high speed.

GROUP 5

The In Cold Blood mission is a toughie. The snow makes you slide all over the place, the track is hard to see, and most of the race takes place on the side of a mountain, meaning that you spend most of the race at a 90-degree angle. Well, you're halfway through the game now, so what do you expect? The best advice, as for most of the missions, is to just

take it easy. Keep your speed at around a hundred miles an hour – travel any faster and you're a dead man.

Always keep a beady eye on your mini-map, making sure you never stray too far from the circuit, and avoid getting any big air. When it comes to the ski jump, try and hit the ramp at about 50mph – the car should stay level, thus averting any nasty Eddie The Eagle-type landings. Stay out of the way of the many quarter pipes too, as they can really slow you down.

The real trick to this stage is finding the shortcuts. The many hairpin turns give you ample opportunity, and if you look carefully you can

see narrow passageways and crevices that your car can easily slip into.

In terms of vehicles to use, go for something small and manoeuvrable, or maybe one of the large-wheeled machines on offer – at least then you can obtain some grip on the slippery surface.

🔾 Hit the ski jump at no more than 50mph. This pic, by the way, shows how not to do it.

roofs of those there are some power and armour bonuses. This group of races concludes with an excellent – and easy – mission.

First of all, select a fast, agile car (something like the Eagle, perhaps?), and simply belt around the fairground at top speed killing everything in sight. A lot of the clowns can only be reached through well-timed jumps. For example: the two on top of the tower in the middle of the fairground can be decapitated if you hit the take-off ramp at the right speed (around 100mph).

Watch out though, because some of the clowns don't die at the first attempt. They may be fat, but they're often quite nimble, and sometimes glance off a bumper attempting to escape. Make sure you go back and finish them off, and only leave the scene of an 'accident' after dismemberment has taken place. ➔

The group five missions are where you should start thinking about a new car.

GROUP 6

The Runway Runaway race can be full of surprises, especially if you head into the airport terminal. If you drive up the stairs there are some duty free shops, and on the

🔾 There are plenty of useful goodies just waiting to be snapped up at tax-free prices.

🔾 This clown raised a laugh or two. Funniest clowns ever.

GROUP 7
CP 1/1 LAP 1/2
15960 CREDITS
1:00
WASTED 1/7
9/976 KILLS
0472

Well, the level is called Seaman Splatter.

GROUP 7

There are only four air traffic controllers to kill on the Control Freak mission, but look where they are – right at the top of the tower. It takes some practice, but it seems the only real way to reach these well-guarded enemies is to use the airport 'props' as ramps to jump up to the tower. If you're very lucky you can smash straight through the glass.

However, another method is to find a Slaughter Mortar and fire into the control tower to kill them. Alternatively, grab one of those tail things and see if you can smash the windows with that. Of all the levels, this one seems to be down to luck rather than judgement but, as always, if you improvise you can't really fail. The time limit is the real enemy here, so don't hang about when you first start.

GROUP 7

You need perfect timing to break into the control tower.

GROUP 8

Solid Granite Car power-ups are strewn all over the USS Lewinsky. Use these to make short work of the gun turrets; any left over can be demolished by picking up the mutant tail thingy near the start.

When the turrets on the top deck have been destroyed, head below deck as quickly as possible. There are more turrets here – wipe these out using the same technique. The core of the ship can be dispatched in the same way. When you've done all that, head up to the top deck and kill the admiral.

You need a medium-sized, tough car because you're often caught up in explosions. Anything small and defenceless is going to be annihilated in these situations, so make the right choice.

↑ Scour every part of the airport – there are bonuses, peds and power-ups everywhere.

↑ If you run out of 'Granite' power, try taking a swipe at the turrets with the ball and chain.

GROUP 9

This is the first time you face opponents on a mission stage and they don't mess about. Their vehicles are massive and they know how to use them. Being rammed into one of the many cliff faces is a common occurrence here, so make sure you keep moving constantly. You can combat their tactics by selecting a fairly large car yourself. The only trouble is that you have to decide how much speed you're willing to sacrifice, as the time limit here is again tight.

To destroy the oil wells, slowly drive into the nearby black boxes. The wells can be levelled in any

GROUP 9

Avoid large vehicles like this – given the chance they will utterly annihilate you.

Push the levers on the boxes to detonate the oil wells. Watch out for nearby cars though.

order, but it's probably best to go for the ones in wide open areas first; wait until the field has thinned out a bit before heading off into the frantic zones.

GROUP 10

The second race is superb. In true Blues Brothers spirit, choose a fast car and set about confusing the feds. Try to get two or three to chase you around, then pick up a Kangaroo power-up (or something of the that ilk), go flat out towards a brick wall and jump at the last moment. Any police chasing you crash into the wall and die. This hectic city stage is bursting with similar cunning tricks, so don't be afraid to let your despicable mind run riot.

After the fun comes the horror – the final stage. This is probably the only really linear level in the entire game, and to be frank it's a bit of a shock to find. Prepare for this stage by picking the fastest car available. After that the key to this stage is opening the blast doors. Basically, any canisters you see knocking around must be destroyed – blowing them up opens various blast doors around the silo. The first few are obvious, they encircle some kind of dome. But after that they're not so easy to find, especially with the cruel time limit imposed. But follow the route, destroy everything you see and it all becomes apparent. All you need is speed and a good memory – master that combination and you complete the game. Well done. All you have to do now is wait for *Carmageddon III.* **PCZ**

⊕ When the race begins you are surrounded by pigs. Get the hell out, and then lure them into traps.

Being able to drive at high speed with immaculate car handling is the only way to get through the final level.

CHEATS

Still can't do it? Well here's a complete list of every cheat the game has to offer. If you can't cut it with these activated, you really haven't got a hope

Cheat	Effect
LAPMYLOVEPUMP	Cheats enabled
IWISHICOULDFLYRIGHTUPTOTHESKY	Fly mode
SMARTBASTARD	Complete the race
WETWET	Bonus
GLUGGLUG	Mega-bonus
STICKITS	Peds glued to the ground
MEGABUM	Giant peds
TWATOFF	Explosive peds
CLINTONCO	Hot rod
FASTBAST	Turbo peds
SUPACOCKS	Invulnerability
TINGTING	Free repairs
MINGMING	Instant repairs
STOPSNATCH	Timer frozen/time thaw
WATERSPORT	One underwater ability
TIMMYTITTY	Time bonus
CLANGCLANG	Bodywork trashed
BLUEBALLZ	Frozen opponents
BLUEPIGS	Frozen cops
SWIFTYSHIFTY	Turbo opponents
PIGSMIGHTFLY	Turbo cops
MOONINGMINNIE	Lunar gravity
TILTY	Pinball mode
STICKYTYRES	Wall climber
JIGAJIG	Bouncy mode
MRWOBBLEY	Jelly mode
DOTACTION	View peds on map
FRYINGTONIGHT	Ped electro ray
WOTATWATAMI	Greased tyres
STUFFITUP	Damage magnifier
EYEPOPPER	Instant handbrake
ANGELMOLESTERS	Immortal peds
WHIZZ	Turbo
SUPAWHIZZ	Mega-turbo
LEMMINGIZE	Stupid peds
TAKEMETAKEME	Suicidal peds
PILLPOP	Five recovery vouchers
BIGTWAT	Solid granite car
DUFFRIDE	Rock springs
BLOODYHIPPY	Drugs
RUBBERUP	Gripomatic tyres
GOODHEAD	Peds with stupid heads
STIFFSPASMS	Mutant corpses
LEDSLEDS	Gravity from Jupiter

Cheat	Effect
EASYPEASY	Slow-motion peds
TINYTOSS	Mini-peds
FURKINELL	Turbo bastard nutter nitros
HOTASS	Afterburner
DIDEDODI	Mine shitting ability
LIQUIDLUNGE	Oil slick from your arse
SKIPPYPOOS	Kangaroo on command
ZAZAZ	Ped annihilator
POWPOW	Opponent repulsificator
OOHMESSYMESS	Dismemberfest
XRAYSPECS	Ethereal peds
GETDOWN	Groovin' peds
MRMAINWARING	Ped panic attack
FARTSUITS	Helium peds
LARGEONE	Pissed peds
HIPPOTART	Fat bastard peds
BLOODYARTISTS	Stick insects
COWCOW	Ped repulsificator
OSOSTRONG	Extra armour
OSOFAST	Extra power
OSONASTY	Extra offensive
OSOVERSATILE	Extra everything
OSOSTRONGSOSTRONG	Double extra armour
OSOFASTSOFAST	Double extra power
OSONASTYSONASTY	Double extra offensive
OSOVERSATILESOVERSATILE	Double extra everything
STRINGVEST	Max armour
VASTNESSES	Max power
FISTNESSES	Max offensive
SKEGNESSES	Max everything
THATSALOTOFARMOUR	Extra armour slot
THATSALOTOFPOWER	Extra power slot
THATSALOTOFOFFAL	Extra offensive slot
THATSALOTOFSLOTS	Extra slots all round
STRONGBONES	Bonus armour slots
FASTBONES	Bonus power slots
NASTYBONES	Bonus offensive slots
LOADSABONES	Bonus slots all round
EVENINGOCCIFER	Drink driving
FRYFRY	Ped flame-thrower
INEEDAPILL	Ped Valium
OYPOWERUPNO	Power-up cancel
BIGDANGLE	Mutant tail thing
BONBON	Slaughter mortar
GOTOINFRARED	Cloaking device

"Look! There's John Merrick. Kill him, the beast."

HOW TO...
MAKE YOUR OWN HALF-LIFE LEVELS

Half-Life. Game of the Year. Best Game Ever. Mucho favulos fallia-hella Chris Waddle. And so on. Pity that the map-editing package that comes with it makes as much sense as a Hong Kong phone directory – but keep reading and you'll soon suss it
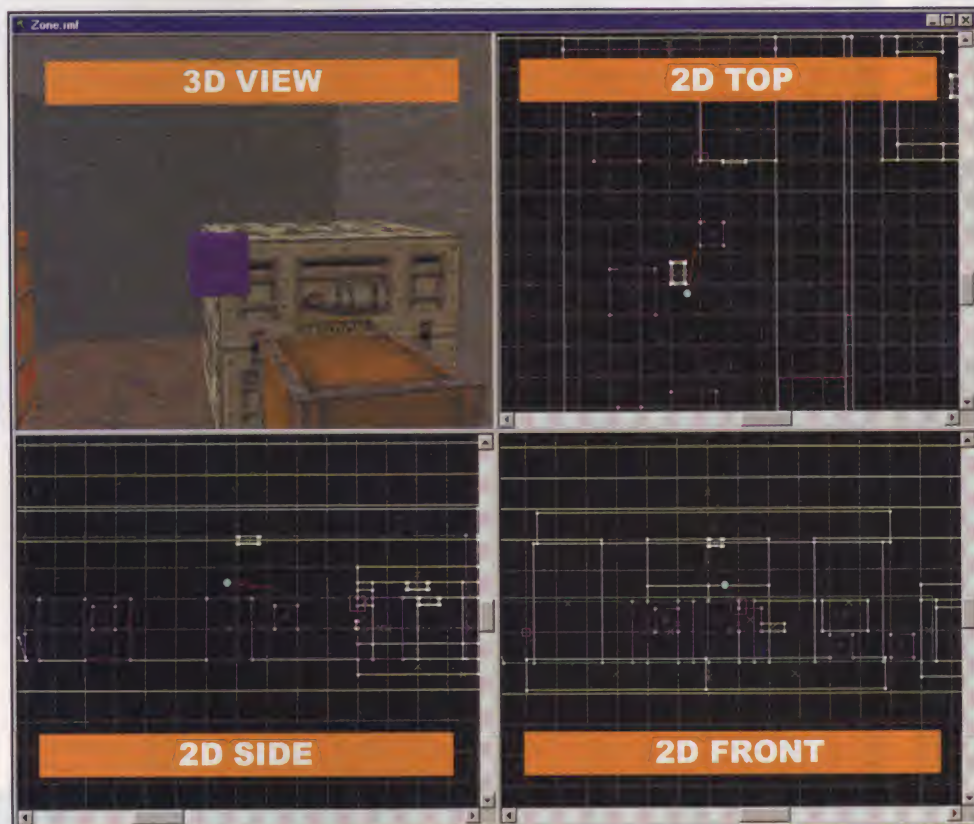
PART ONE

⭐ **HALF-LIFE HOTSHOT** Phil Wand

Fig 1: The 3D view shows a preview of your map and its rooms. The 2D views are where you do the actual editing.

⬆ Button functions (from left): Selection tool, Magnify, Camera, Entity tool, Block tool, Toggle texture application, Apply current texture, Apply decals, Clipping tool, Vertex tool, Path tool.

So you want to make your own *Half-Life* deathmatch levels, do you? Ha ha ha ha ha... Er, fine. Well, you're reading the right bit of the magazine, which is probably a good start. You're also obviously completely deranged, because it ain't an easy task, and even the smallest, simplest map is going to take the best part of a week to get right. Let's get something clear right from the start: if you're going to try making your own levels, you need to be mad, bad, and dedicated to the task at hand.

If you haven't already done so, you need to dig out your original *Half-Life* CD-ROM and put it in the drive. Open it up, find the *WorldCraft* subdirectory, and then double-click on the WC20.EXE installer in order to get Valve's map-editing software bundled onto your hard drive. Now double-click on the *WorldCraft* icon to get the thing fired up and running, and check the **Configuration** section to see how to customise its basic settings. After you've done that, you're ready to start building the level.

GETTING THINGS GOING
Press **Ctrl + N** or choose **New** from the **File** menu. This brings up a new editing window, complete with four empty view panes **(fig 1)**. Clockwise from top left they are: 3D view, 2D top view, 2D side view and 2D front view. The 3D view enables you to see a semi-decent preview of your map and its rooms. The 2D views are where you do the actual editing.

Now we can create our first room. Select the **Block tool** from the *WorldCraft* toolbar, or hit **Shift + B**. Click and drag a 10x10 square in the 2D top view pane, make sure it's 10x10 in the two other 2D view panes, then press **Enter** to create it.

In order to transform our newly created block into a 3D cube (ie a room), choose the **Selection tool**, right-click on the centre of the block, and choose **Hollow** from the pop-up menu. Hit **OK** to choose the default wall thickness of 32. Abracadabra – you now have a room, complete with four walls, a ceiling and a floor. It might not look much right now, but just you wait.
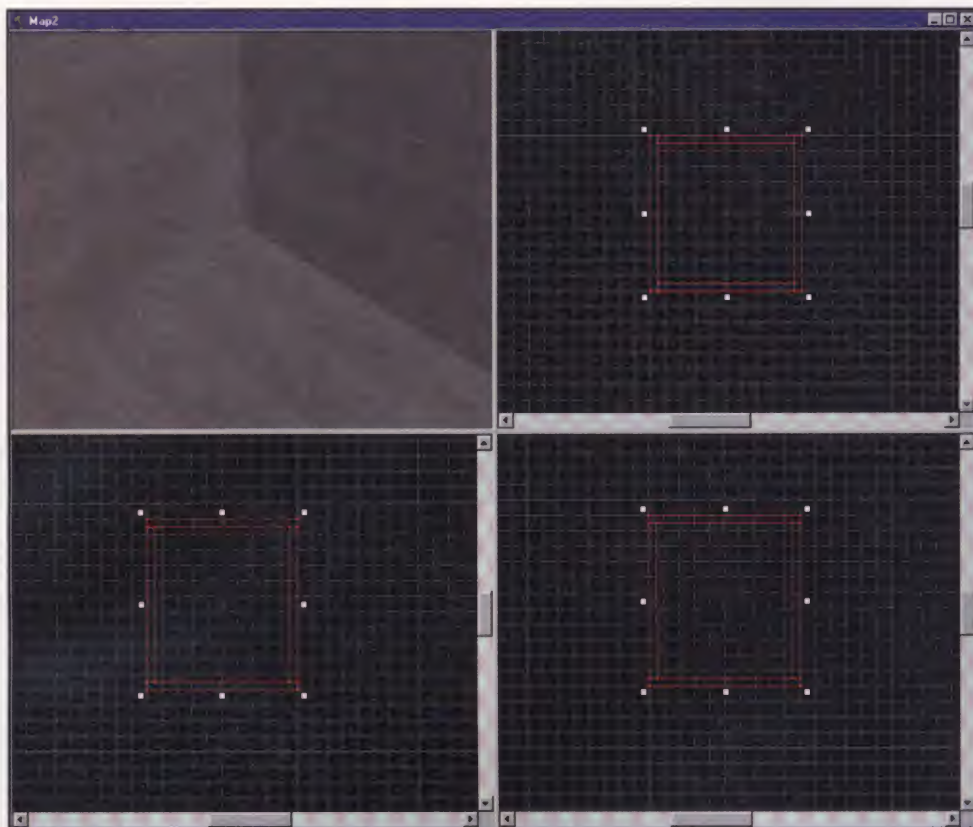
Fig 2: If all goes well, you should see a fully rendered scene in the 3D view panel.

Fig 3 & 4: Choose a texture or textures to apply to the walls of your new room. Flock wallpaper is not an option, by the way.

DECORATING OUR FIRST ROOM

Select the **Camera tool**, then click and drag in the centre of the room we just created. The blue dot represents the camera, the red line is the view direction. Point the camera at one of the corners (**fig 2**), choose **3D textured polygons** from the top toolbar or from the **View** menu, and you should then see a fully rendered scene in the 3D view pane. Click and drag around the pane and you can pan the camera. Neat, huh?

Go back to the **Selection tool** and click on one of the walls in the 3D pane. They should turn red to show you that they're selected. Now click on the **Browse button (fig 3)** in the **Textures** toolbar (normally top right), and a whole bunch of cool-looking *Half-Life* graphics fill a selection box.

> **" The simplest map will take the best part of a week to get right. If you're going to try making your own levels, you need to be mad, bad, and dedicated to the task at hand "**

To make things easier to see, select **64x64** from the **Size** drop-down menu – the graphics now appear as small thumbnail images (**fig 4**).

Scroll down to the texture named C1A3WALL05 and double-click on it (you can also type C1A3WALL in the **Filter** box, which narrows down the selection process considerably). Now choose **Apply current texture** from the toolbar – you then see the textures change accordingly in the 3D view.

LET THERE BE ENTITIES

Like any building that's all walls and no windows, our new room needs a light source or it will be pitch

CONFIGURATION

Both the *WorldCraft* readme and its pitiful online help system refer to configuring your new editor, but they don't actually tell you how to do it. So here's how. First and foremost, make sure the Options dialog box is open – this occurs automatically the first time you run the software; you can also get at it from the Tools menu. Now read on...

GAME CONFIGURATIONS TAB
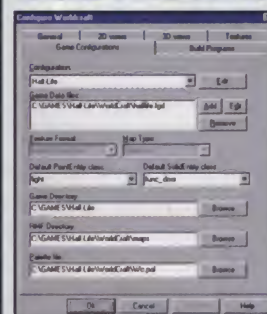
Click the Edit button. Click the Add button and type 'Half-Life'. Close the box and click Add to add the game data file from your *WorldCraft* directory. Once that's done, select your main game directory by clicking the Browse button next to the Game Directory input box. The RMF directory refers to the location where your *WorldCraft* map files are stored, and Palette file, WC.PAL, is found in the main *WorldCraft* directory. The relevance of the two drop-down boxes we missed, Default PointEntity class and Default SolidEntity class, will become clear later.

TEXTURES TAB
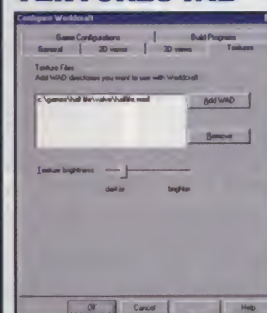
This configures where all the textures come from – in this case, from the various data files supplied with *Half-Life*. So click on Add WAD and browse along to your *Half-Life* directory. Drill down to the Valve subdirectory and you can see nine or so WADs lurking in there. Double-click on HALFLIFE.WAD.

BUILD PROGRAMS TAB
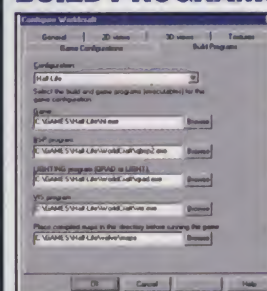
In the Game input box, select HL.EXE, the *Half-Life* executable. In the BSP input box, choose QBSP2.EXE from your main *WorldCraft* directory. Select QRAD.EXE for your LIGHTING program, and VIS.EXE for your VIS program. Lastly, ensure that Compiled maps are placed in the valve\maps subdirectory (in your main *Half-Life* directory).

The other tabs refer to various software settings and how *WorldCraft* behaves – at this stage, you don't need to bother with this, so just press OK to save the new configuration and return to the editing interface.
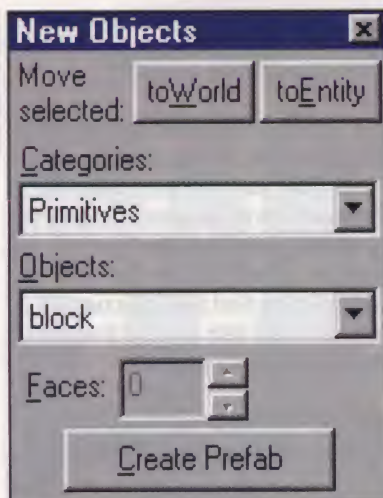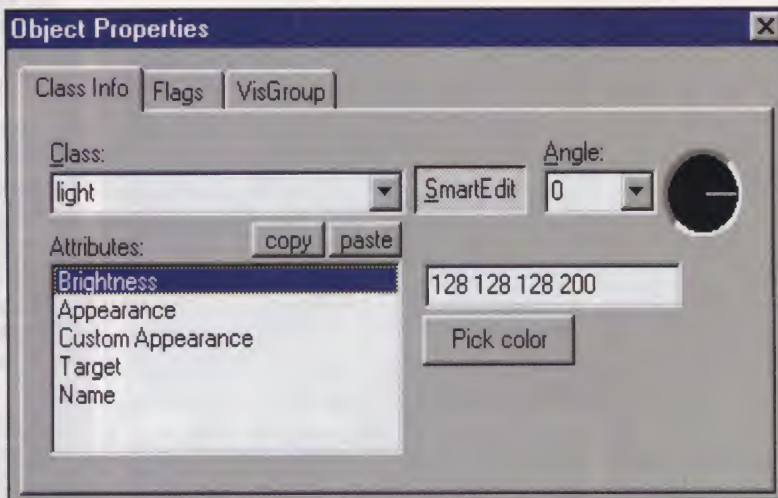
Fig 5: Let there be light!

Fig 6: But how bright and what colour do we want the light to be?

> **"As it stands, there's something a little phoney about our room. Nobody builds a room that's a mathematically precise cube – nobody who's sane, anyway"**

black when you step inside to test it. So that's what we're going to tackle next.

Select the **Entity tool** from the *WorldCraft* toolbar, or hit **Shift + E**. Making sure that you've got **light** selected in the **New objects** toolbar (middle right), click in the centre of the 2D top-view pane **(fig 5)**.

You now see a green crosshair appear, which you can move around with the mouse. Get it centred in all three 2D views and then hit **Enter** to create it – just as we did with the block in the previous step. If you want to, you can zoom in on the pane with the **+** and **–** keys, and then right-click on the purple square representing the light source. Choose **Properties** from the pop-up menu that appears **(fig 6)**, and experiment with different values for the **Object attributes** section in order to change exactly how the light illuminates our little room.

Before we run and test our level, we need to put in a player start position. Without this you'll get nowhere. So again choose the **Entity tool**, and this time make sure you've got **info_player_start** selected in the **New objects** toolbar. Click anywhere in the 2D view panes and press **Enter** to create the start position.

THE FIRST COMPILE

As long as you've configured *WorldCraft* as per our **Configuration** section, testing your map will simply be a one-click process.

Having made sure that you've saved your work, choose **Run** from the **File** menu, or press **F9** to bring up the **Run map** dialog box **(fig 7)**. For now, go with the default settings and click the **OK** button to test out your map. *Half-Life* should now fire up and automatically load the level which, if we're being honest, is duller than ditch water. But no matter. What you've done over the past few steps is to create the one vital building block needed for every new level – the room. And it wasn't that difficult, was it?

GETTING MORE EXCITING

We're going to move along a bit and make our room a bit more realistic and thus a bit more inviting. For starters, you'll have no doubt noticed that the floor, walls and ceiling all share the same texture, making it humdrum in the extreme. So what we need to do now is paint the floor and ceiling with different textures. Click on the **Texture application tool** to toggle the texture application mode to 'on'. The **Face properties** toolbar now appears **(fig 8)** – click on the **Mode** button at the bottom and make sure it says **Lift+select**.

Now, using the **Camera tool**, pan the 3D view pane around so that you're looking at the floor. Keep a corner in view, so that you can see how your new floor texture aligns with the walls.

Next, go back to the **Selection tool** and click on the floor. You should notice that instead of clicking with the

regular cursor as before, you're now clicking with a small paint bucket. The floor now turns red and, if not already present, the floor texture appears in the **Face properties** toolbar. This is because we currently have **Lift+select** mode selected.

Now hit the **Browse** button in the **Face properties** toolbar and choose the texture called C2A4_FLR4. Change the mode to **Apply (texture only)** and click on the floor again – it changes from being brick to being tiled. Pan the 3D view pane around to face the top of the room and click at the ceiling (note: instead of using the camera, you can also move the camera by holding down the spacebar while dragging with the mouse). It too now has the tiled texture applied to it – although you can of course spend a little time browsing the texture library and choosing a texture for yourself. You won't be able to resist testing at every stage of production, so hit **Ctrl + S** to save the map and then **F9** to test it.

PILLARS OF WISDOM

When you take a look at our room as it stands, there's still something a little phoney about it. For starters, the shape seems wrong. Nobody builds a room that's a mathematically precise cube – nobody who's sane, anyway. The ceiling is too high, the lighting is too bright, and it's also pretty spartan. Better do something about it.

Making sure you've got the **Texture application tool** toggled off, click on the room in the 2D side view pane. Click on the middle grab handle at the top and just drag the ceiling down to a more sensible height – say, four or five grid boxes tall. Remember to keep a check on entities (ie your light sources), as they may now be sitting outside the walls and subsequently no good to anyone. Click on them and drag them back into the room where necessary.
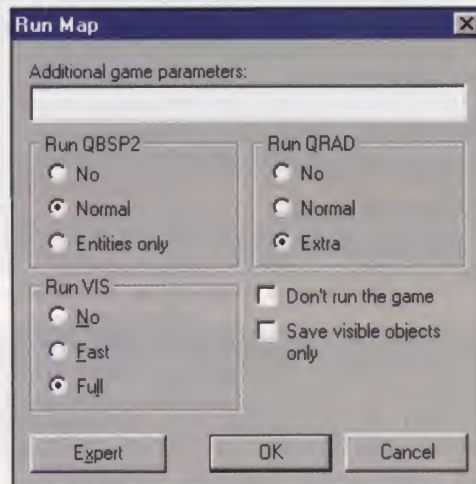
Fig 7: Testing your map is a one-click process.

At this point you could right-click on the light entity and play around with some of the settings in order to get a less clinical feel inside the room. You could also try reshaping the boundaries a bit by clicking on the room and then hitting the **Vertex tool**. You should see that the vertices are marked by white grab handles, and the edges marked by yellow ones.

Subsequent clicks of the **Vertex tool** cycle between vertices and edges, vertices only, and edges only. To manipulate the shape, simply click on the grab handles and move them – hold down the **Ctrl** key if you need to move more than one at a time.

Now we're going to create a pillar to one side of the room. Making sure the **Vertex tool** isn't selected, click on the **Block tool** and select **cylinder** in the **New objects** toolbar. Click and drag a small square in the 2D top view pane. Shift to the 2D side view pane, and make sure the cylinder goes from the floor to the ceiling **(fig 9)**. Press **Enter** to create it, and change the camera location so that you can sit back and admire it.

Just to give you a taste of what *WorldCraft* is capable of, select the pillar, hold down **Shift + Alt** and then drag its clone to another area of the room. If it goes wrong you can always press **Ctrl + Z** to undo.

Toggle texture application mode back on and experiment with different textures, and press **F9** if you feel like a quick run round what you've just created.

ANOTHER ROOM

We're going to round off this month's tutorial with another room. With the first room selected, hold down **Shift + Alt** and drag the copy so that it's two blocks away from the right-hand wall. Now draw a new block in the 2D top view pane that cuts across the two walls and effectively joins the two areas. Make sure that its base is at ground level in the 2D front view **(fig 10)**.

Press **Enter** to create the new block. Select it, right-click on it, and select **Carve** from the pop-up menu. What this does is carve out the two walls and leave the block in place, thus forming an interconnecting corridor between the two adjacent rooms. Select the intruding end of the carve block (this is best performed in the 3D view) and hit **Delete** to remove it and expose the new hole **(fig 11)**.

Finally, add in four new blocks for the floor, walls and ceiling of the corridor. Change the textures as you see fit, and perhaps add a new light source or weapon entity. Save and run your new level, and sit back and view the results of your hard work **(fig 12)**.

Getting this far wasn't really as difficult as you thought it would be, was it? ▧

○ *Having got this far, you can now get all excited about next month's issue (on sale Friday 12 March), where we deal with some of the finer points of deathmatch design.*

Face Properties

Scale: | Shift:
X: 1.00 | X: 0
Y: 1.00 | Y: 0

Rotation:
0.00

Texture group:
All Textures

Current texture:
C1A3WALL05
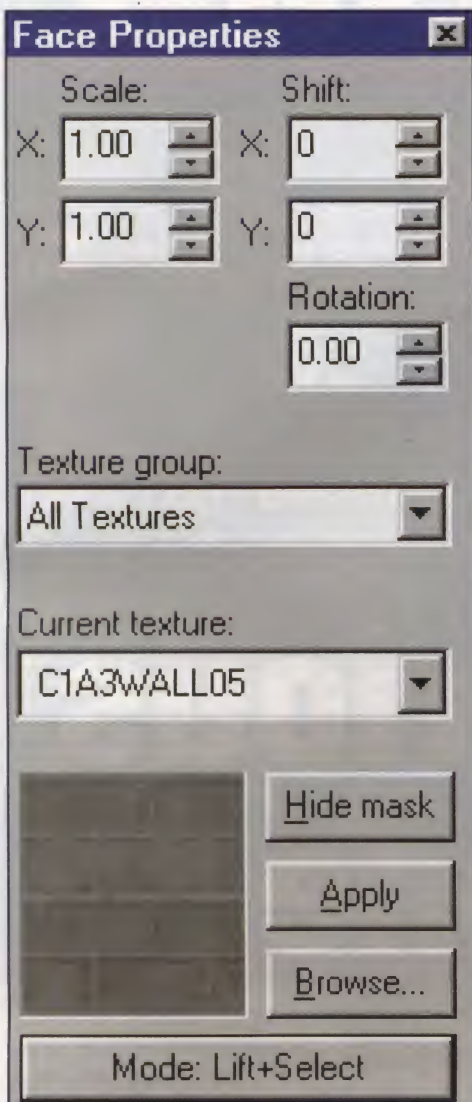
Hide mask
Apply
Browse...

Mode: Lift+Select

Fig 8:
• **Lift+select** selects a single face and retrieves both its texture and associated values.
• **Lift** retrieve both the texture and its associated values from a face.
• **Select** select a face.
• **Apply** (texture only) apply the current texture to a selected face.
• **Apply** (texture + values) apply the current texture and associated values to a selected face.

TURNING JARGONESE

⊗ **Brush or block** Any 3D object with volume – for example, a wall. Brushes are basic shapes that can be grouped into more complex designs. Brushes can also refer to areas of liquid.

⊗ **Entity** Put simply, an entity is anything that isn't a brush. Lights, bad guys, guns and start positions are all entities. Doors and lifts are created by combining special entities with a brush.

⊗ **Texture** The tiled images that make a brush look real. They can be anything, but most commonly look like metal or stone. When animated, they can be made to look like liquids.

⊗ **Face** A single side of a brush. For example, a box will have six faces, one for each edge. Each face can be assigned a different texture.

⊗ **Vertex or vertices** The bounding corner of a brush. A square brush will have four vertices, and each one can be adjusted to change the shape of the brush.

⊗ **Carving** Changing the shape of an existing brush by overlaying another and subtracting its shape. For example, carving a semicircle from the top of a square to create an arch.

Fig 9: Time to create a pillar to go in the room.
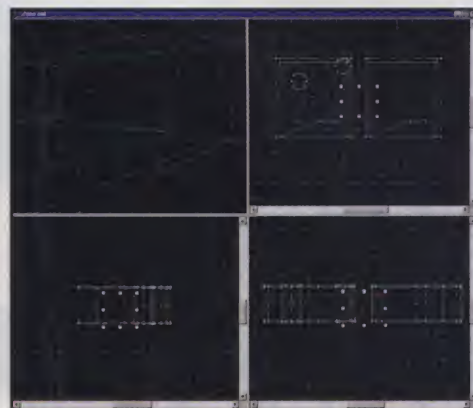
Fig 10: One room's not much use, so let's have another.

Fig 11: Having created a second room, join the two with an interconnecting corridor.

Fig 12: With some different textures and different lighting, our room is really starting to look like one.

DEARWAZZA

**Your techie problems and upgrade questions solved in a flash.
A bit like a floor cleaner. Sort of**

⬤ **MR FIXIT** Warren Chrismas

❝Is it possible to connect two different makes of Voodoo2 card together – a Creative Labs 3DBlaster 12Mb and a Diamond Monster 2 12Mb, for example?❞

YOUSAF NABI

MAKING THE (UP)GRADE

Q I have a Pentium 200MMX with 48Mb RAM and a Voodoo2-based 3D accelerator. I'm really excited about the forthcoming *Quake III* (Quake Arena, *you mean? – Ed*), but I'm worried that my computer won't be able to run it – after all, *Half-Life* doesn't look nearly as good as *Quake III* and yet needs a pretty hefty PC to run. How would I go about upgrading it to a Pentium II? I don't have enough money to buy a brand new computer.

Joe Bullock

A You're making a few assumptions here. *Half-Life* should run okay-ish on your PC (it's just about playable on a P166), and as *Quake Arena* isn't finished yet no one actually *knows* what PC specification it will need.

Explaining what you need to upgrade is a feature in itself, but if you wish to switch to an Intel Pentium II you will not only need to buy a new processor but also a Slot 1-type motherboard and, almost certainly, new memory boards too. Oh, and possibly a new case as well, depending on whether your current machine uses the AT or newer ATX format (see AT-XTRAS letter below).

The main alternative is to upgrade with an AMD K6-2 processor. These are cheaper than the Intel equivalents and can be fitted straight into a Socket 7 motherboard designed for Pentiums. The snag? The motherboard must be able to support 100MHz bus rates – and only very recent Socket 7 motherboards do. In other words, it's time to empty that piggy bank.

AT-XTRAS

Q I'm thinking of getting a new case for my PC. My office PC (Dell Optiplex) has the ability to turn itself on and off when I close down Windows 95 – that is, instead of Windows saying "It's now safe to turn off your computer" and sitting there while it waits for me to switch it off, it turns the PC off automatically. I have noticed that most portables are able to do this as well.

Is this something that only Dells can do, or is there some standard that both motherboard and case must meet to be able to do this (such as ATX specification on Pentium II machines)? I don't even know if the feature has a name.

Matthew Harvey

A As you've guessed, this facility – generally referred to as 'soft power' – is a feature of motherboards that comply to the ATX standard.

A bit of background information for you: nearly all PC motherboards, cases and power supplies are built to particular dimensions and with certain features so that components from different manufacturers are fully interchangeable.

For a long time the form factor used was AT (or baby AT), but in 1995 Intel unveiled ATX. This has now overtaken AT as *the* standard and is used by the vast majority of PC and peripheral manufacturers (although there is another standard called LPX used for low-profile machines).

ATX machines are generally less messy inside (features such as serial, parallel, USB and PS/2 mouse ports are actually built on to ATX motherboards as standard, easier to upgrade (there's better access to components) and more efficient (thanks to better cooling and reduced voltage power supplies). And, yes, Windows 95/98 can tell an ATX motherboard to switch the whole system off.

The important thing to keep in mind is that AT and ATX components are *not* interchangeable in any way. So if you want to buy an ATX case (which has an integrated ATX-style power supply), ➡

READER WRITES

Q Just a couple of points about the answer you gave to Lee Gorringe under the heading YOU NT-ER in your December issue (*PCZ #70*). An awful lot of games are coming out now that are NT/Windows 95 compatible. NT is a business platform but it will run the majority of games faster than Win95 (I won't go into the techie reasons behind it but, believe me, it does). You can even set the priority of the game to make it run faster still.

The only games I've had no success getting to run are those that actively search for your revision of Direct X (NT's SP3 has most of DirectX 5 bundled in it, but games requiring it don't spot it – putting some null entries into the registry may blag the game into believing you have it, although I wouldn't recommend it).

Most hardware is now also Win95/NT compatible, complete with the associated drivers, so you will get hardware acceleration from most cards. Older games are a bit poo under NT, as it runs in a NTVDM, although you can tweak this to improve performance. Thunking *(What? – Ed)* the code will slow it down regardless.

I dual-boot my system at home, between NT and Win95, running NT in an NTFS partition. If a game supports NT I run it under NT, if it supports Win95 I'll attempt to run it under NT anyway (with a success rate of about 80 per cent, although you need to bugger about with it a bit). If that fails I'll run it under 95 and swear profusely if the game crashes cos it'll probably take the OS with it as well (something we NT-ERs rarely witness!).

I think the point you're making is that it's more hassle than it's worth trying to get NT to run games, when you can plonk them straight on to Win95 and they work first time, which is fair comment. All I'm saying is that if you persevere with NT, the games will work. It's a bit more complicated, but the advantage is that they run faster and with more stability.

Got to say, you run a brilliant mag. Your hardware and software reviews are practically 100 per cent spot-on.

Stuart Miller (aka Nephilim)

A Thanks for that, Stuart. We always appreciate hearing the experiences of readers, especially those who are fundamentally agreeing with us!

PC ZONE is read by a huge variety of PC users, from those who barely know what a hard disk is (don't laugh, we were all beginners once), to some who seem to enjoy nothing better than spending a weekend tweaking and optimising their PC to gain an extra 0.01 per cent performance.

As I am sure you can appreciate, it's sometimes difficult knowing who to pitch answers to on these pages. Ultimately, however, the one thing that most of us have in common is that we want to get on with actually playing games – preferably with as little fuss as possible.

For the vast majority of gamers, running Windows NT at home really doesn't make any sense, hence our original answer.

£50 WINNER!

you also need a new ATX-form motherboard. Upgraders sticking with AT-form components, for whatever reason, should be aware that the old standard is seemingly dying out pretty darn quickly.

WINDOW TWEAKY

Q In your October issue (*PCZ* #68) you had an email from Rob regarding the Add/Remove Programs and how it would leave stuff behind. Your answer was to download Power Tools and install the Tweak UI thingy. But where the hell do I find it? I have Windows 98 and the Power Tools on offer is for Windows CE. Is there one for 98?

Almosan

A The version for Windows 95, as previously referred to, is still available from Microsoft's website but not very well flagged. You'll find it at www.microsoft.com/window s/download/tweakui.exe.

And, yes, a Windows 98 version is available – in fact you've already got it. It's not installed by default, but is actually on your Windows 98 disc in the \TOOLS\RESKIT\ POWERTOY directory.

GRIM SITUATION

Q I've got a problem with *Grim Fandango*. I've got to the stage with the city at the end of the world, and when I'm wandering around the crane the game randomly crashes out. Obviously it's very hard to play it properly, thinking that it may bomb at any second. If I use the 3D acceleration (I have a Voodoo2-based card) my system crashes. If I don't use it the game crashes and returns me to Windows.

I've tried looking on the LucasArts website but they appear to have only automated support, which has no mention of the problem. This situation is very annoying!

Peter Gordon

A Several of us here at *ZONE* have played the game through without problems, and as far as we know the game doesn't contain any major bugs.

Grim Fandango: no major bugs, so problems with the game bombing out must be elsewhere.

We'd guess that you have some corrupt data somewhere – either the installation on your hard disk (have you tried re-installing?) or, more likely, a scratch or something on the CD (have you taken it back to the shop?).

If re-installing the game and changing the discs doesn't help, we suggest you call the technical support line of the UK distributor of the game – that's Activision on 01895 456 7000.

NICE PAIR

Q Is it possible to connect two different makes of Voodoo2 card together – a Creative Labs 3DBlaster 12Mb and a Diamond Monster 2 12Mb, for example? I want to set up two cards in an SLI (Single Line Interleave) configuration but I don't want to have two copies of the same bundled games.

Yousaf Nabi, Romford

A All 3D accelerator boards based on 3Dfx's Voodoo2 are built to a tight specification, so in principle it should be possible to connect two different boards without problems (although we don't actually know of anyone who has done it). Also, your reasoning does make some sense.

However, as reported in Tech-Head in our Xmas issue (*PCZ* #71), some companies are now selling twin-packs of Voodoo2 boards – aimed at people like yourself who want to run an SLI configuration – at special discounts. You should shop around and try to find the best price for a matching pair. Oh, and don't forget to make sure that you get the SLI connecting lead included.

HARD DRIVIN'

Q I'm in a world of shit. I've just run out of hard disk drive space and need a new one. I own a crappy Packard Bell with Windows 95. Can my machine handle a Quantum Bigfoot 8.0Gb E-IDE/Ultra DMA hard drive, and what does all that mean? Can I just bung it in any old space and connect it to my Primary IDE slot along with my existing C drive?

Will Thomas

A Can your PC 'handle' a Quantum Bigfoot 8.0Gb E-IDE/Ultra DMA hard drive? Yes, although unless you use FAT32 (supported by later versions of Win95 as well

as Win98) you'll have to partition the disk into four separate drives (each under the FAT16 limit of 2.1Gb) with a program called Fdisk. Related issues were explained in our response to the FAT CHANCE query in our December issue (*PCZ* #70).

What does it mean? Well, er, Quantum Bigfoot is the drive

> **"Whenever I start up my computer, Windows always demands that I run ScanDisk in case my hard disk has errors. Why, when I always shut down and restart properly?"**
>
> **SAM DEARLOVE**

manufacturer and model name, 8.0Gb is obviously the size (eight gigabytes), and E-IDE is the type of interface it uses (that is, Enhanced IDE rather than SCSI, which is the other main standard).

The fact that it supports Ultra DMA means that it uses an interface capable of data transfer rates of up to 33.3Mb/sec. Whether your PC's motherboard supports Ultra DMA is another matter altogether (check your manual), but the various standards are backwardly compatible, so while you might not get the optimum performance out of the drive, it's not a problem as such.

Incidentally, Quantum's Bigfoot drives have a large, 5.25-inch form factor (the same size used by old 5.25-inch floppy and CD-ROM drives). Maybe this is why you're considering it? In which case it's probably worth pointing out that while most other hard drives use a 3.5-inch form factor (yes, the same size as 3.5-inch floppy drives), these can still be fitted into large drive bays with the use of a metal cradle, which you can pick up from most computer stores.

It's relatively easy to add a second IDE drive to a PC using the Primary IDE connection (the Secondary IDE is typically used by a CD-ROM drive). The only 'tricky' bit is knowing that you have to set up one drive as a

master drive and the other as a slave (this is done with small plastic jumpers on the drives), but all this is explained in the manual or leaflet supplied with the new unit.

Obviously it makes sense to make your new drive (which is likely to be quicker than the older model) the master drive which your machine boots up from. There are other ways to do it, but we'd temporarily set up the new drive as the slave (second) drive then boot up your PC from your original drive as usual, format the new drive (important: *with* Windows system files), and copy everything across from the old drive to the new one.

Now switch the jumpers so that the new drive is the master and the old drive is the slave. If everything is working okay you should boot from the faster model. It is then safe to delete all the old files from your original drive. Of course, if that drive is much smaller and slower than the new unit, you might want to get rid of it altogether.

I'M YOUR SCAN

Q Whenever I start up my computer, Windows always demands that I run ScanDisk in case my hard disk has errors. Why, when I always shut down and restart properly? My system is an AMD K6 233 with 32Mb RAM, 6.4Gb hard disk etc. I'm running with Win95 integrated with *Internet Explorer 4*.

Sam Dearlove

A Later revisions of Windows 95 run ScanDisk on boot-up if Windows has not been shut down properly (eg it's crashed or, say, you've suffered a power cut), but it really shouldn't be doing it if you're exiting properly.

We don't know the cause of your problem, but we can tell you how to switch the feature off. Find the msdos.sys file in your hard disk's root directory and open it with something like Notepad. Now, under the Options heading, type Autoscan = 0 and then save the file. Note: do not change or add anything else or you risk causing boot-up problems.

Incidentally, if you disable this feature you really should make sure you run ScanDisk manually direct from Windows (it's in the Programs/ Accessories/ System Tools folder) at regular intervals. PCZ
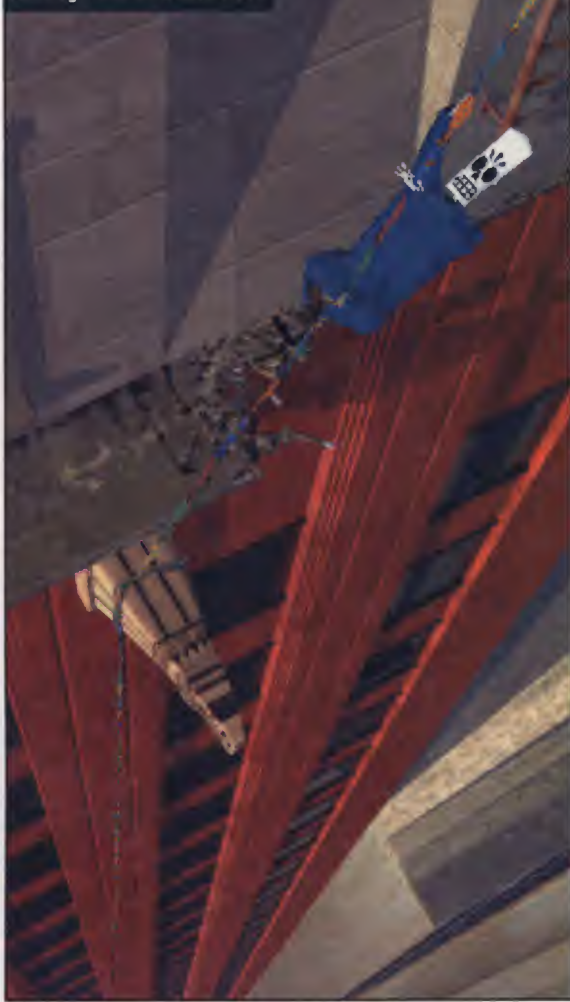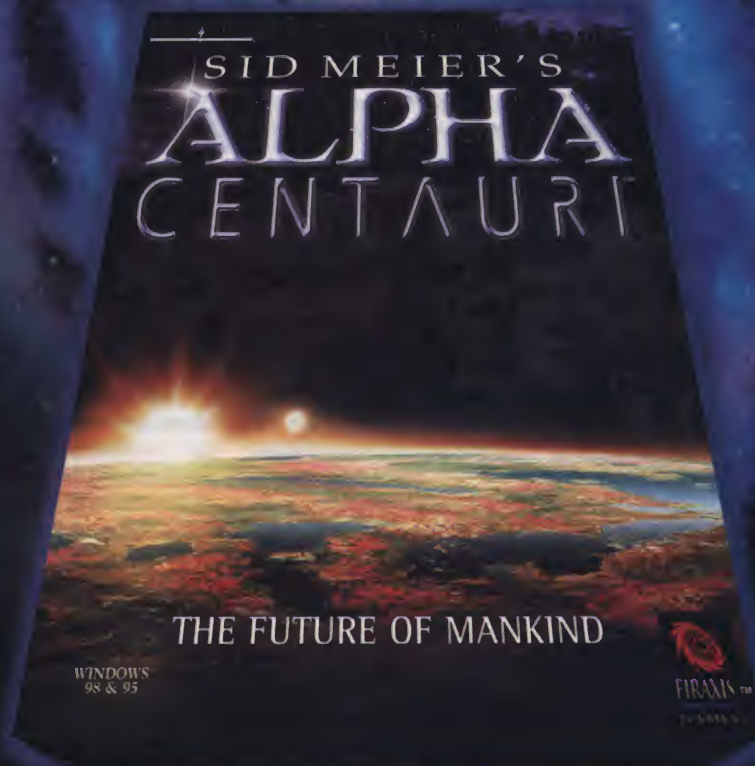
WATCHDOG

There are several companies fighting for space in the doghouse this month, but there's always room for more so write to us with your consumer complaints

⭐ **ANSWERED BY** Adam Phillips

DOH!

We're here to help. If you've got a consumer issue that needs addressing then drop us a line. But please remember that technical issues are not covered by Watchdog – if you've got a techie problem, write to Dear Wazza (page 133).

WRITE TO Watchdog, *PC ZONE*, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ.

EMAIL us at letters.pczone@ dennis.co.uk with the subject heading 'Watchdog'.

BLACK SPOT

Q I've just bought a ThrustMaster Formula Sprint steering wheel, which I'm using with *Grand Prix Legends*. I took the wheel back to the shop because it had a dead spot just to the right of dead-centre, but the replacement has the same problem. When I run *TMScope* I can see that this is not due to the hardware – the values change smoothly as the wheel turns – so the problem must be with the Win95 device driver.

It makes games almost unplayable – there's nearly an inch of dead zone when you're trying to drive at 200mph down a cambered, narrow, hedge-lined road such as at the Nurburgring. A steering wheel is supposed to make games easier to drive, not harder! This steering wheel makes driving a Formula One car feel like driving a knackered old bus. Is there anything I can do, or will there be an updated driver to remove this problem?

Nigel Charman

A ThrustMaster told Watchdog that they are aware of some initial issues with the 'dead zone', but claim that these have now been rectified. You can download the latest Formula Sprint driver (version 1.2) at the ThrustMaster website (www.thrustmaster.com); check out the Formula Sprint's support section or, alternatively, find it stashed on our cover CD (see page 142).

Finally, ThrustMaster have said that if you require a new CD they would "of course be happy to supply you with one". Give them a call on 01276 609955.

SINFUL CODING

Q I'm getting to the end of my tether. Will I ever be able to purchase a new game and play it straight out of the box. Or is it now a fact of a PC gamer's life that we must beta-test it first, send in our bug reports, then wait for a patch to be released? The biggest culprit at the moment is Activision's *SiN* – please note my use of the publisher's name rather than the developer's. The whole thing is a mess. First off, the loading times are painfully slow and totally ruin the flow of the game. It also boasts bugs in the AI – ooh, that first boss is *so* hard to kill when it just stands in the subway doing bugger all. Also, the save games fill up what space is left on your hard disk.

So out comes a patch. It fixes

> ## "This steering wheel makes driving a Formula One car feel like driving a knackered old bus"
>
> **NIGEL CHARMAN ON THE THRUSTMASTER FORMULA SPRINT**

the above bugs and many, many more. Just to be nice, we're also given a new deathmatch map (or did they just forget it the first time?). Off I go to download it. But it only supports the US version, so my save games aren't going to work (again). And the icing on the cake? It's 18 megs worth!

There's no way I'm gonna download something this size. I've resorted to letting the CD gather dust until I can get hold of the patch on a cover disc. After months of production, I refuse to believe that Ritual, the developers, would want their product to appear on store shelves in this form. It stinks of an attempt by Activision to release *SiN* early and unfinished, purely to steal some of *Half-Life's* thunder while cashing in on Christmas.

This sort of thing has got to stop. Console developers and publishers have to get it right first time – the Internet and patches are not an option for them. Having said that, if the Dreamcast ships with a modem included, all that could change.

Steve Griggs

SOUR AT SEGA

A Direct 3D patch for *Last Bronx* was supposedly due last April. What happened?

Q Sega PC released the 3D beat 'em up *Last Bronx* for the PC in March 1998. Several weeks before its release, Sega announced that there would be a Direct3D patch, as the retail version only had support for DirectDraw. The expected release date was April '98. So far there's still no sign of it, and the ads suggesting such a patch would be available were pulled off Sega's website a few months ago.

Sega sold *Last Bronx* under false pretences. Reviewers of *Last Bronx* were told a Direct3D patch was on its way, ads were placed on Sega's website saying that it would be released shortly, and consumers who emailed Sega asking about it were told that it was almost done.

It's obvious that Sega had no intention of creating such a patch, and I can imagine that people who bought *Last Bronx* feel conned. I think it's important to tell Sega that this is intolerable, which is why I've started a petition to get Sega to make a Direct3D patch. Owners of this game only have to fill in their name and address, and in a few weeks the results will be sent to Sega. The online petition can be visited at http://members.xoom.com/seganl/bronx/.

Wilco Ibes

A Watchdog duly asked Sega what they've been playing at. Have they really 'duped' their customers, or has Wilco Ibes simply got the wrong end of the stick?

The game makers offered the following explanation: "Sega did mention that a 3D patch may be released for this title in the future. However, this was not something that had been 'promoted' or 'advertised' in order to sell the product. None of our advertising or packaging has any mention of Sega

creating and releasing a 3D patch at a later date. However, as we always try to improve our product quality – and we have released 3D patches for titles such as *Virtua Fighter 2, Daytona USA Deluxe, Worldwide Soccer PC* and *Sega Touring Car* – there may have been an assumption among gamers that the same would occur for *Last Bronx*. We simply took note of users' expectations and mentioned on our site that a patch may be released – however, it was never guaranteed. For *Last Bronx*, we carried out a feasibility study on the benefits of creating a 3D patch – it wasn't deemed to be beneficial. Our efforts on *Virtua Fighter 2* show that for such fighting titles the quality of DirectDraw versions was at such a high standard that additional 3D support didn't help the game enormously."

Sega say they regret raising your expectations, and further hope that you "receive comfort in the fact that Sega will be spending this development time instead on creating another great product".

So, do you feel comforted, Wilco? And make sure you let us know if your petition bears any fruit in the meantime.

Last Bronx and the case of the disappearing (or never to appear) patch.

A We can't help but agree with you when it comes to the mass of bug-laden software littering the marketplace. *PC ZONE* would love to see the day when we don't have to fill our cover CDs with patches when we'd rather be putting more goodies on it for our punters. Hopefully services like Watchdog help in some way by naming and shaming the worst offenders. As for a time when 99 per cent of bugs are wiped off the face of the gaming planet, well, there's more chance of William Hague becoming the next prime minister.

As for your complaints about *SiN*, Activision regret any problems you may have encountered with the game. Fortunately a patch disc is available free of charge by either emailing sin@activision.co.uk or by writing to Customer Support, Activision, 133 High Street, Yiewsley, West Drayton, UB7 7QL.

Oh, and the patch disc includes a bonus deathmatch level 'with a twist' – everything is upside down. Gosh! There's also a playable demo of *Heavy Gear II* and a rolling demo of *Civilization: Call To Power* for your troubles. Hopefully those games won't need patches.

APOCALYPTIC ANGER

Q I recently purchased a 3Dfx card on the cheap – a crappy Apocalypse 3Dx for £55. The card, which promised arcade action at "full-motion frame rates", sounded appealing, especially since I'd just bought *Quake II*.

Not so. The card is complete and utter rubbish. *Quake II* ran at about three frames per second – I timed a demo – and newer games like the *SiN* demo you had on your CD a few months back didn't run at all. Why is this? The recommended spec was a P166. I met this and expected the games to be at least playable.

I phoned VideoLogic, who said that the minimum spec was a P2-266 chip, and that I should buy one. I'm still at school and I've already spent £55 on the card, and a further £50 on memory for both my system and video card so the thing would actually work. And in any case, it said P166 on the box, so what's the problem? I phoned back later having tried their solutions (which didn't work,

incidentally) and they told me that my problem was that my processor was non-Intel. That's complete rubbish! I'd tried it on a friend's Intel P166 and it ran slower than on mine!

I know it's an issue that's slightly out of date, but in today's world of rapidly changing hardware, what isn't? But cheers for listening anyway. My advice? Avoid Apocalypse. It really didn't deserve *PC ZONE*'s review score of 89 per cent.

Alan Paget

Patches: many of them shouldn't be necessary.

A Watchdog contacted VideoLogic on your behalf. "After its launch at the end of 1997," offered David Howard, the company's PR manager, "the Apocalypse 3Dx received many awards for its performance and quality. Since then, as Alan points out, technology in this fast-moving industry segment has changed dramatically, and for that reason the A3Dx market price has been reduced to its current level of £49, where it remains an excellent introduction to hardware 3D acceleration."

Plug over, he went on to explain: "Some PC games launched since the debut of the Apocalypse 3Dx have much higher system requirements than the minimum hardware specification for use of the card. Most games using the *Quake II* engine, for example, require a more powerful processor than the minimum specification to fully use Apocalypse 3Dx graphics acceleration. That said, the reported frame rate of 3fps is lower than we would expect with an Intel Pentium 166. Tests in-house show an average frame rate of around 10fps in a well-optimised similar configuration.

"As well-documented in the PC press, some earlier, non-Intel processors are often less fully featured for gameplay, particularly with respect to Floating Point arithmetic, and can produce much lower frame rates."

VideoLogic are sorry to hear about your problems, and would like you to contact their technical support desk again to see whether they can offer further assistance in optimising your system's performance. Call them on 01923 277477, and let us know how you get on.

PLEASE RELEASE ME, LET ME GO...

Q I'm not bothered about the dates that game publishers release their games on, but about the dates on which games retailers themselves start selling games. It all began when I went to Game in Blackburn a week before *Klingon: Honour Guard* was due out to see whether the release date had changed (again).

The manager of the store said that the date was set and that I would "have to wait until Friday to play it, unlike us". I asked what he meant by "unlike us". He then revealed that they'd had the game sitting in their stores for half a week and had been enjoying it thoroughly. And this was a week before it was due to be released!

So I thought WTF? Today I went into Game and looked at the 'coming soon' list. And it hit me! Friday – every single game has been 'sold' on a Friday! Only a fool would write it off as a coincidence. I'd like to know why this unfairness is allowed to go on. I carefully follow the release dates set by the publishers – and they are nowhere near the retailer release dates.

Peter

A Grant Hughes of Game offered the following explanation: "Game adheres rigidly to product release dates, which are stipulated by software publishers. Obviously, if a product is released at 9am on a Friday, then it has to be shipped to stores before then in order to be processed and put out on the shelves. Game staff are not allowed to borrow products, nor are they allowed to purchase them before release dates. Our staff are, however, allowed to try out a top game in-store before it is released for two reasons: firstly, to inform customers about the product, and secondly to enable customers to try out the game for themselves. We understand the frustrations of customers, but under no circumstances will Game break release dates."

Welcome to the *PC ZONE* Top 100. Here you'll find the games that in our expert opinion are the current top PC games in their field, as well as a few extras you might like to consider if you're a big fan of the genre

ACTION GAMES
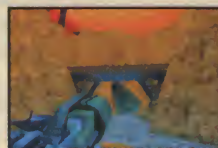
QUAKE II   PCZ #59 • 97%
⊕ The sequel to 'the most important PC game ever' turns out to be more than worth the wait. Despite the odd bit of slowdown, single-player and deathmatch games are in a league of their own. As Macca concluded in his review: "*Quake II* is pretty much perfect." Buy it now.
PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456700

HALF-LIFE   PCZ #71 • 95%
⊕ Arriving a whole year late but definitely worth the wait, this has to be the 3D shooter of the year thanks to a superb single-player game. We'll have to wait and see whether it will beat *Quake II* in the deathmatch arena.
PUBLISHER Sierra • 0118 9209100

JEDI KNIGHT: DARK FORCES II   PCZ #55 • 94%
⊕ It's not *Quake*, but then it doesn't even try to be. But it is a compelling, technically superb blend of action and exploration neatly wrapped up in the *Star Wars* universe. Altogether most impressive.
PUBLISHER LucasArts/VIE • 0171 368 2255

FADE TO BLACK   PCZ #31 • 94%
⊕ The unofficial sequel to the excellent *Flashback*, this is a near-perfect blend of third-person exploration and combat action. The technical precursor to the fantastic *Tomb Raider*, it's a classic in its own right.
PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

PRIVATEER 2: THE DARKENING   PCZ #44 • 94%
⊕ The ultimate mix of space combat, *Elite*-style trading and FMV action, *Privateer 2* was the first big budget release from Origin which used live action in a positive way. Absolutely packed with stars, this is pukka stuff.
PUBLISHER Origin/EA • 01753 549442
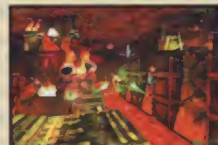
FORSAKEN   PCZ #63 • 94%
⊕ *Descent* is dead and *Forsaken* is now king of the tunnel-based shoot 'em ups. With huge, varied levels, heaps of graphical effects, weapons and a fantastic multiplayer LAN-based game, it's up there with the best of 'em.
PUBLISHER Acclaim • 0171 344 5000

WARGASM   PCZ #71 • 93%
⊕ Famed for their flight sims, DID finally deliver an action game only they could produce. With helicopters, APCs, and hapless infantry running about, this is as fast-paced as a tank game could be – and it's even better to share.
PUBLISHER Infogrames • 0181 738 8199

SHOGO: MOBILE ARMOUR DIVISION   PCZ #71 • 92%
⊕ Half *Quake*, half *MechWarrior*, this 3D action game breathes fresh air into a stale genre. With great graphical effects and an involving storyline, it's perhaps just a bit too easy for the *Quake* hard-core.
PUBLISHER Microids • 00331 4601 5401

SIN   PCZ #70 • 91%
⊕ Until *Duke 4Ever* appears, *SiN* is the closest in feel to its ageing classic predecessor. Based on the *Quake II* engine, *SiN* offers a superb single-player game thanks to some ingenious level design. Highly recommended.
PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive • 0181 636 3000

TOMB RAIDER III   PCZ #72 • 91%
⊕ There's a good chance that in 20 years' time the *Tomb Raider* 'thingy' will be looked upon with as much fondness as *Star Wars* is today. This third outing may not be as ground-breaking as its predecessor, but it's the best so far..
PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive • 0181 636 3000

ALSO CONSIDER

THIEF: THE DARK PROJECT Eidos Interactive• PCZ #72 • 90%
TOM CLANCY'S RAINBOW SIX Take 2 • PCZ #69 • 89%
UNREAL GT Interactive • PCZ #65 • 93%
QUAKE Activision • PCZ #43 • 96% **BUDGET**
SPEC OPS: RANGERS ASSAULT Take 2 • PCZ #65 • 88%
JEDI KNIGHT: MYSTERIES OF THE SITH LucasArts • PCZ #62 • 95%
MDK Interplay • PCZ #50 • 90%
LAST BRONX Sega • PCZ #62 • 87%

RACINGGAMES

CARMAGEDDON II   PCZ #69 • 95%
☼ It's *that* game again, this time with full 3D pedestrians. More blood, more cars, more tracks – and now with added missions. If you liked the first one, you'll love this one. If you don't, you can just bog off.
PUBLISHER SCI • 0171 585 3308

FORMULA 1 GRAND PRIX 2   PCZ #36 • 95%
☼ The amazing sequel to the greatest F1 driving sim ever. Updated brilliantly for the 94/95 season with all-new detailed circuits, cars and teams. The game will run on a 486DX2 but you'll need a Pentium to run the hi-res mode.
PUBLISHER MicroProse • 01454 893893

COLIN MCRAE RALLY   PCZ #68 • 93%
☼ Sporting an updated *TOCA* engine, *Colin McRae* has become the new benchmark in rally simulations. With car customisability and a heap of multiplayer accessibility, this game should be top of everyone's rally games heap.
PUBLISHER Codemasters • 01926 814132

MONACO GRAND PRIX   PCZ #69 • 92%
☼ Essentially this is *F1 Racing Simulation 2*, and an F1 fan's wet dream come true. It looks beautiful, plays even better, and the AI is second to none. You need a hefty machine to have it looking its best though.
PUBLISHER Ubi Soft • 081 944 9000

GRAND THEFT AUTO   PCZ #58 • 92%
☼ This is the game that took over from *Carmageddon* as the media's favourite pet hate. Steal cars, dodge police, mow down pedestrians and cause mayhem in city streets in one of the most addictive driving games ever. *Micro Machines* on acid.
PUBLISHER BMG • 0171 973 0011

NEED FOR SPEED III   PCZ #69 • 91%
☼ Some arcade racing games are fun, but if you like a bit more than just just racing around a few tracks then you should seriously consider *Need For Speed III*. Why? Because if avoiding the law isn't fun, what is?
PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

MOTOCROSS MADNESS   PCZ #67 • 91%
☼ An astoundingly addictive game. Loads of game and race options and tremendous fun, especially when played with a Microsoft Freestyle Pro pad over a network. Soon available with the pad for around 50 quid. A must-buy.
PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002000

MICRO MACHINES 3   PCZ #64 • 90%
☼ The manic miniature racing game gets the 3D treatment and loses nothing along the way. The new power-ups might not please the purist, but *Micro Machines 3* is still one of the finest two-player games around.
PUBLISHER Codemasters • 01926 814132

MOTORHEAD   PCZ #63 • 90%
☼ With drop-dead graphics and a blistering frame rate, this is a ridiculously fast, fab-looking, intense racing experience. Add a great LAN-based option (Local Area Network) and *Motorhead* is the ace of arcade racers.
PUBLISHER Gremlin Interactive • 0114 273 8601

GRAND PRIX LEGENDS   PCZ #69 • 90%
☼ Papyrus, the makers of *NASCAR* and *IndyCar*, have put the danger back into Formula 1. If you fancy a challenge and the chance to go back to the teams and drivers of 1967, then buy this. You'll need a steering wheel though.
PUBLISHER Sierra • 0118 920 9100

ALSO CONSIDER
INDYCAR 2 Cendant• PCZ #34 • 90% **BUDGET**
SCREAMER 2 Virgin • PCZ #45 • 93% **BUDGET**
DESTRUCTION DERBY 2 Psygnosis• PCZ #46 • 86% **BUDGET**
INTERSTATE 76: NITRO RIDERS Activision• PCZ #63 • 87%
TOCA: TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP Europress • PCZ #59 • 86%
ULTIM@TE RACE PRO MicroProse • PCZ #62 • 88% **BUDGET**

SPORTSGAMES

LINKS LS   PCZ #43 • 94%
☼ The classic golf sim gets an update, and unsurprisingly it's fab. There's more options, luscious graphics, a redesigned menu and a view selection system. There's even a built-in upgrader for all the old data disk courses you splashed out on.
PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive • 0181 636 3000

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR GOLF   PCZ #69 • 93%
☼ Beautifully presented, as always, and sporting a speedy enhanced graphics engine, this latest in the *PGA* series also gets star endorsement by young Tiger Woods. Without question, this is the best golf game yet.
PUBLISHER EA Sports • 01753 549442

NHL 99   PCZ #70 • 92%
☼ The problem with all ice hockey games is the confusion that ensues after each ruck. *NHL 99* is no different in that respect, but updated graphics, enhanced AI and spiffy presentation make this game a must for fans of the sport.
PUBLISHER EA Sports • 01753 549442

PETE SAMPRAS TENNIS 97   PCZ #53 • 92%
☼ This game doesn't quite better *Super Tennis* on the SNES, but it's as close as you'll get on the PC. The simple control system means it's instantly playable, but we may as well tell you now that the women's skirts still don't fly up when they serve.
PUBLISHER Codemasters • 01926 814132

FIFA 99   PCZ #71 • 92%
☼ Another biannual release from EA Sports that, as per usual, is better than the last. You'll have to think long and hard before shelling out another £40, but if you love footie it's well worth it for the best football game available for the PC.
PUBLISHER EA Sports • 01753 549442

SENSIBLE SOCCER
EUROPEAN CLUB EDITION   PCZ #69 • 90%
☼ It's still top-down, and it's still simple, fast and fun. *World Cup '98* may be prettier, but it can only dream of being as instantly playable as *Sensible Soccer European Club Edition*.
PUBLISHER GT Interactive • 0171 258 3791

VIRTUAL POOL 2   PCZ #58 • 90%
☼ Okay, so *Virtual Pool 2* scored one per cent less than its predecessor, but this follow-up beats it hands down. 3dfx support goes some way to pushing the series further, and the inclusion of English Pub rules make it a more essential purchase than before.
PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666

THE GOLF PRO   PCZ #62 • 90%
☼ If you're bored with either *PGA* or *Links,* then this is the best of the 'mouse-swing' bunch. Good course design and some excellent tuition means there's loads of gameplay, though the putting lets it down a tad.
PUBLISHER Empire Interactive • 0181 343 7337

ACTUA SOCCER 3   PCZ #72 • 89%
☼ Although better than last year's effort, *Actua 3* fails to snatch the title from EA this time around. Mind you, with a good range of options and a huge range of teams to play against, this certainly has a longer shelf life than *FIFA.*
PUBLISHER Gremlin Interactive • 0114 273 8601

NBA LIVE 99   PCZ #73 • 87%
NEWENTRY Being an EA Sports title, *NBA Live 99* is, unsurprisingly, the best game in its field. If you're a Sprite-drinking hoop fan there's plenty here to justify the annual upgrade. If not you'll neither know nor care.
PUBLISHER EA Sports • 01753 549442

ALSO CONSIDER
☼ There's always a swell of different sports game types depending on the current sporting season. These are worth having a look at...
JIMMY WHITE'S 2: CUEBALL Virgin Interactive • PCZ #68 • 88%
MADDEN NFL 99 EA Sports • PCZ #71 • 87%
TRIPLE PLAY 99 Electronic Arts • PCZ #64 • 90%
TROPHY BASS 2 Cendant • PCZ #50 • 84%

ADVENTURE GAMES

ALONE IN THE DARK 3 — PCZ #21 · 95%
Better than the previous *AITD* instalments, *Alone 3* is a tense, ambient tale of Navajo Indian magic and reincarnation that unfolds in the usual *AITD* manner. This is now available as part of a compilation budget pack.
PUBLISHER Infogrames · 0181 738 8199

BIOFORGE — PCZ #25 · 95%
Futuristic *Alone In The Dark*-style game with impressive graphics, puzzles and soundtrack. Often preferred over *AITD* games as its unique blend of arcade combat is explosive. The only drag is EA's refusal to make a sequel for it.
PUBLISHER Electronic Arts · 01753 549442

SYSTEM SHOCK — PCZ #20 · 95%
This futuristic first-person cyberpunk adventure from the makers of *Ultima* was initially overlooked by many people. Now available on budget, this is a must-buy for those new to the genre. The graphics might be a little dated, but the atmosphere is still invigorating.
PUBLISHER Electronic Arts · 01753 549442

DISCWORLD II — PCZ #44 · 93%
Perfect Entertainment's immaculate sequel to *Discworld* follows would-be wizard Rincewind in his search for the Grim Reaper. Not as hard as the first game, but bigger and better looking. *Discworld II* is a universally appealing adventure game.
PUBLISHER Psygnosis · 0151 282 3000

INDIANA JONES AND THE FATE OF ATLANTIS — PCZ #37 · 93%
Follow a post-*Raiders* Indy in his search for the submerged metropolis. Three ways to play make for a high replayability factor, and the inter-character banter is brilliant.
PUBLISHER LucasArts/VIE · 0171 368 2255

LBA 2: TWINSEN'S ODYSSEY — PCZ #54 · 93%
Twinsen is back – this time to thwart those pesky Esmers in this sumptuous sequel. The huge play area in *LBA 2*, coupled with seamlessly linked puzzles, creates a great-looking and hugely atmospheric adventure. A must for adventure fans.
PUBLISHER Electronic Arts · 01753 549442

SAM & MAX — PCZ #11 · 93%
The hilarious dog/rabbit duo's first and only PC outing, in which they need to solve a host of bizarre puzzles. An all-talkie adventure with a gag-laden script, this is an essential budget-priced purchase even if you're not a point-and-click fan.
PUBLISHER LucasArts/VIE · 0171 368 2255

THE CURSE OF MONKEY ISLAND — PCZ #58 · 92%
The third game in LucasArts' classic *Monkey* saga delivers the goods big-time, much to the relief of adventure fans everywhere. *The Curse Of Monkey Island* is the new benchmark for point-and-click adventure games.
PUBLISHER VIE · 0171 368 2255

GRIM FANDANGO — PCZ #71 · 90%
LucasArts not only do the best adventure games, but have also recently been doing the only adventure games worth buying. This latest has style written all over it, and hopefully signals a rosy future for fans of the genre.
PUBLISHER LucasArts · 0171 368 2255

KING'S QUEST VIII: MASK OF ETERNITY — PCZ #71 · 89%
To mark the genre's transition from point-and-click to a full 3D interface, Sierra's eighth *King's Quest* adventure proves an engaging stopgap, even if it is a little too Americanised. Good but not great.
PUBLISHER Sierra · 0118 920 9100

ALSO CONSIDER
FULL THROTTLE Virgin · PCZ #27 · 92% BUDGET
THE PANDORA DIRECTIVE Virgin · PCZ #43 · 92%
TOONSTRUCK Virgin · PCZ #45 · 93% BUDGET
GABRIEL KNIGHT 2: THE BEAST WITHIN Cendant · PCZ #36 · 88%
LITTLE BIG ADVENTURE Electronic Arts · PCZ #21 · 93% BUDGET

ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

ULTIMA UNDERWORLD 2: LABYRINTH OF WORLDS — PCZ #1 · 94%
This improves on almost every aspect of its prequel, *The Stygian Abyss*. You explore a complex, ever-evolving dungeon; it has unsurpassed atmosphere and interaction.
PUBLISHER Origin/EA · 01753 549442

FINAL FANTASY VII — PCZ #66 · 93%
Fearsomely addictive gem of a game of truly epic proportions. Great graphics, plenty of hidden surprises and massive levels will keep you totally absorbed if you forgive the risible dialogue and turn-based combat.
PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive · 0181 636 3000

REALMS OF THE HAUNTING — PCZ #47 · 93%
Although overlooked by many fans of the genre, our Mallo gave it a whopping 93 per cent when he reviewed it back in issue 47. Still well worth a look if you happen to see it going cheap, *ROTH* is a well cool mix of adventure and RPG.
PUBLISHER Gremlin Interactive · 0114 273 8601

LANDS OF LORE: GUARDIANS OF DESTINY — PCZ #56 · 92%
Four long years in the making, Westwood Studios' mammoth new adventure proved more than worth the wait. Sumptuous visuals and a tremendous atmosphere combine to make it an instant classic.
PUBLISHER VIE · 0171 368 2255

ULTIMA VII — PCZ #3 · 89%
Arguably the best of all the *Ultima* games, *Ultima VII* blends character interaction and the exploration of the world of Britannia. The last *Ultima* series to give complete party control. Check out the *Ultima Collection* for a real treat.
PUBLISHER Origin/EA · 01753 549442

DIABLO — PCZ #48 · 88%
Standard hack 'n' slash fare, but pulled off with such style that it's addictive. A great storyline compensates for repetitive arcade combat and supremely detailed animation makes it a superb coffee-table game.
PUBLISHER Zablac/Blizzard · 01626 332233

TERRIS — PCZ #44 · 88%
A MUD in the old-school style of text-based RPGs, but it's so addictive that we're still playing it. The various quests, puzzles and monsters will keep you going for days. The gameplay is excellent, if you can handle the 'texty-ness'.
PUBLISHER AOL · 0800 279 7444

FALLOUT 2 — PCZ #71 · 86%
Does exactly what it says on the tin. Twice as big as the original, but utilising the exact same engine. If you like the first game, you'll love this – not twice as much, but certainly for twice as long. A real life-sapper.
PUBLISHER Interplay · 01628 423666

BALDUR'S GATE — PCZ #73 · 85%
NEW ENTRY With every developer 'going 3D', it's refreshing to find an old-school RPG that combines traditional D&D role-playing with sumptuous 2D graphics. Intelligent and involving in equal measures.
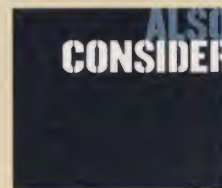**PUBLISHER** Interplay · 01628 423666

ULTIMA UNDERWORLD: THE STYGIAN ABYSS — PRE-PC ZONE
This took role-playing games away from first-person tile-based RPGs. Amazing architecture, witty characterisations, layers of storyline and the best ending of any game in history.
PUBLISHER Origin/EA · 01753 549442

ALSO CONSIDER
These are the cream of the crop, largely because RPGs have taken a back seat to other game types over the last couple of years. However, also bear in mind...
DIABLO: HELLFIRE Cendant · PCZ #59 · 82%
ULTIMA COLLECTION Electronic Arts · PCZ #62 · 90%
RAVENLOFT: STONE PROPHET Mindscape · PCZ #25 · 78%

STRATEGY GAMES

SYNDICATE WARS — PCZ #43 • 95%
One of the best strategy games of all time gets a sequel, and what a fabulous sequel it is too. *Syndicate Wars* houses a wealth of intricate levels, gorgeous graphics and enough gratuitous violence to keep anyone happy.
PUBLISHER EA/Bullfrog • 01753 549442

X-COM 3: APOCALYPSE — PCZ #52 • 95%
A revamped engine and a healthy helping of real-time combat have brought the fantastically addictive *X-COM* series bang up to date. If you like your strategy games deep and meaningful, you should buy *X-COM 3* immediately. It'll keep you busy for weeks.
PUBLISHER MicroProse • 01454 893893

AGE OF EMPIRES — PCZ #54 • 94%
Imagine *Civilization II*'s great empire-building gameplay improved with some excellent graphical touches and comprehensive multi and single-player options (all in real time). That's *Age Of Empires* in a nutshell.
PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002000

CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 3 — PCZ #73 • 93%
NEW ENTRY No fancy graphics, no sound and no online multiplayer options do nothing to hide the fact that *CM3* is one of the most addictive games you'll ever play. Forty quid for a season ticket to nirvana? Bargain.
PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive • 0181 636 3000

POPULOUS: THE BEGINNING — PCZ #70 • 92%
The original *Populous* was the game that put Bullfrog into orbit and made Peter Molyneux one of the biggest names in the industry. Now Peterless, the new Bullfrog team show that they can do just as well without him.
PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

MAGIC & MAYHEM — PCZ #70 • 92%
Based on the old Spectrum game *Chaos*, *X-COM* creators Mythos deliver a diverse and original fantasy strategy game. A strong single-player element and a manic multiplayer game make this a well-deserving classic.
PUBLISHER Virgin • 0171 368 2255

TOTAL ANNIHILATION — PCZ #56 • 92%
With a ridiculous number of units and its fast-paced action, *Total Annihilation* is without doubt one of the best real-time strategy games ever. The polygon units are smooth, and multiplayer games are awesome. Pisses on *Red Alert*.
PUBLISHER GT Interactive • 0171 258 3791

SIMCITY 2000 — PCZ #13 • 92%
A classic that deserves its reputation as one of the all-time greats in the strategy world. Build and maintain the city of your dreams and cope with all the problems a real-life Mayor would come up against. It's a lot more fun than it sounds, trust us.
PUBLISHER Maxis • 0171 505 1500
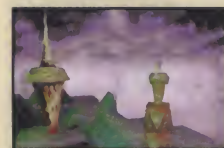
THE SENTINEL RETURNS — PCZ #66 • 90%
Twelve years on, the sequel to the 'classic' Amstrad and BBC Micro strategy-fest makes a welcome return. Some may find the gameplay a tad too repetitive, but it's compelling and runs happily on a P133.
PUBLISHER Psygnosis • 0151 282 3000

CIVILIZATION II — PCZ #36 • 90%
Explore the world, conquer territories and research new technologies in one of the most successful strategy games ever. It's not that different to the first one, but it merits a '90s update and a place here.
PUBLISHER MicroProse • 01454 893893

ALSO CONSIDER
WARLORDS III: DARKLORDS RISING Broderbund • PCZ #67 • 90%
OPERATIONAL ART OF WAR VOL 1 Empire • PCZ #68 • 92%
COMMANDOS Eidos Interactive • PCZ #66 • 87%
DUNGEON KEEPER Electronic Arts • PCZ #53 • 96% **BUDGET**
MASTER OF ORION 2 MicroProse • PCZ #45 • 92% **BUDGET**
COMMAND & CONQUER: RED ALERT VIE• PCZ #47 • 94%
CAESAR III Sierra • PCZ #70 • 92%
M1 TANK PLATOON II MicroProse • PCZ #63 • 90%

FLIGHT SIMULATION GAMES

FALCON 4.0 — PCZ #72 • 95%
After waiting literally years for this, the wait was worth it. With 3D-accelerated graphics and a dynamic campaign structure, *Falcon 4.0* can fly against the best of them – and win. One of the best flight sims ever seen.
PUBLISHER MicroProse • 01454 893893

F-22 TOTAL AIR WAR — PCZ #68 • 95%
This full-price new version of DID's masterpiece is perhaps a bit of a rip-off for anyone who already owns *F-22 ADF*, but those of you looking to buy one of the greatest combat sims of recent years should seriously consider this one.
PUBLISHER Ocean/DID • 0161 832 6633

FLIGHT SIM 98 — PCZ #55 • 94%
Another year, and yet another flight sim to come from the mighty Microsoft. However, this time, with two new aircraft, a helicopter, hundreds of new airports and hugely impressive 3D acceleration, it's really worth having.
PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002000

APACHE HAVOC — PCZ #73 • 94%
NEW ENTRY Of the three main chopper sims available, *Longbow 2* is the one if you're a hard-core sim head, *Team Apache* if your preference is the other way, and *Apache Havoc* straddles the gap. And the graphics are to die for.
PUBLISHER Empire Interactive • 0181 343 7337

LONGBOW 2 — PCZ #59 • 92%
"*Longbow 2* is challenging, beautiful, exciting and fun – if you're 3Dfx'd up," we said in our review. If you don't have any extra graphics hardware, there's only one thing to do – think 'upgrade', 'upgrade' and 'upgrade'. It'll be worth the investment.
PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

JANE'S F-15 — PCZ #64 • 92%
A hard-core propeller-head's sim that can stand alongside the awesome *Longbow 2* as one of the most realistic flight sims available. Newbies to the genre might find it a bit overwhelming, but it's worth persevering with.
PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

FLYING CORPS GOLD — PCZ #59 • 92%
Action-packed WWI flight simulation with neato graphics. Some of you may recall *Red Baron* as one of the greatest WW1 flight sims ever – this improves on the old classic to become the best PC WW1 sim currently available.
PUBLISHER Empire Interactive • 0181 343 7337

A-10 CUBA! — PCZ #59 • 90%
Functional graphics for a game that really does capture the imagination, mainly because the plane is an absolute joy to fly. Although it's slightly limited due to a lack of a fully-fledged campaign it's still great fun, as well as being pretty speedy on a modest Pentium.
PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456700

JANE'S WORLD WAR II FIGHTERS — PCZ #72 • 90%
It's been a fierce dogfight to see who rules the WWII flight sim skies. *Jane's* combines realism with accessibility and ease, and although the game doesn't have a dynamic campaign feature its graphics make it a clear winner.
PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

FLIGHT UNLIMITED II — PCZ #60 • 84%
It can't really compete with the behemoth that is *Flight Sim 98*, and as a result is somewhat limited and claustrophobic. However, it does score highly for being more detailed in its smaller area, and much more fun.
PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive • 0181 636 3000

ALSO CONSIDER
If a flight sim is good, you can bet it'll stay on the shelves for a long time – hence our recommendation for *Jetfighter III*. Some of the more recent releases worth considering include…
AIR WARRIOR III Interactive Magic • PCZ #62 • 80%
F-16 AGGRESSOR Virgin • PCZ #70 • 92%
COMANCHE GOLD NovaLogic • PCZ #65 • 87%
F/A-18 KOREA Empire Interactive • PCZ #61 • 90%

ONTHECD

The eagerly awaited *Alpha Centauri* tops the bill this month, as well as demos of *Kings Quest VIII* and *Resident Evil 2*

WORDS Mark Hill **DISKMEISTER** Daniel Emery

HELP!

CD trouble? Don't worry – phone our helpline and sort yourself out, pronto!

CD-ROM HELP Phone ABT on 01708 250250 or pczone@abt-net. demon. co.uk Any weekday between 9:30am and 5pm, and Saturday from 10am to 2pm. (Please do not phone the *PC ZONE* office. Thanks.)

BEFORE YOU DIAL... If you are calling either helpline, then please take note of the following points:

● If possible, have your PC operating and near to the phone when you call.

● If this is not possible, note down all relevant information – ie system type, sound card, RAM etc – plus the nature of the fault.

● Make sure you have a pen and paper to hand when you call to jot down the relevant info.

DEMOS + SHAREWARE

ON THE CD

MINIMUM SPECIFICATION

● You'll need at least a Pentium 133 with 16Mb RAM to run the software on this month's CD-ROM.

● Many of the programs on our cover CD-ROM are designed to run under Windows 95 and, as a result, some of them may require a Pentium 166 with 32Mb RAM to run satisfactorily. Please note that some games also require a 3D accelerator card to run.

● Use the browser and menu system to see which demos are Windows 95, DOS and 3D accelerator only.

SID MEIER'S ALPHA CENTAURI
Firaxis/EA

Civilization II (*PCZ #70, 90%*) is still regarded by many as the greatest strategy game ever, so it's not surprising that the arrival of Sid Meier's new game has been so eagerly awaited. The demo has a 100-turn single-player game, with the chance to build ten bases and research technology up to level five. (*Alpha Centauri* is reviewed on page 72.)

Controls:	Mouse

REDGUARD
Bethesda Softworks/Virgin

From the makers of *Daggerfall* comes this 3D-card-only swashbuckling adventure. This demo doesn't let you into any of the buildings, but you can talk to all the characters in the city and kill as many guards as you like – which is always a bonus.

Controls:	Keyboard/gamepad
Up/down	Forward/back
Left/right	Turn left/right
CTRL	Use item/attack with sword/speak
ALT	Defend with sword
SPACE	Jump
TAB	Walk toggle
S	Draw/sheathe sword
I	Inventory
L	Logbook
F7	Auto-defend mode on/off

REQUIEM: AVENGING ANGEL
3DO/Ubi Soft

If you thought being an angel was all about playing a lyre on a fluffy cloud, wake up and smell the sulphur. To save the world from some rebellious angels you have to use magic powers, heavenly machine guns and a 3D card.

Controls:	Mouse/keyboard
E	Forward
D	Back
S	Left
F	Right
SPACE	Jump
Mouse	Look
Left mouse button	Fire
A	Power/weapons menu
T	Cycle powers
W	Cycle weapons

REDLINE
Accolade/EA

This multiplayer-only cross between *Carmageddon* and *Quake* takes you to a futuristic urban warzone to run, race, shoot and crash. You need a 3D card to find out if it plays as good as it sounds.

Controls:	Keyboard/mouse/ gamepad
UP	Forward/accelerate
DOWN	Backward/brake
LEFT/RIGHT	Turn left/right
, and .	Strafe left/right, fire left/right side
SPACE	Jump/parking brake

A new perspective on the *King's Quest* series.

KING'S QUEST VIII: MASK OF ETERNITY

Sierra

The latest in the successful *King's Quest* series throws away the traditional adventure format in favour of a *Tomb Raider*-style third-person perspective. But you won't find Lara faking a Shakespearean accent and slaying dragons like the hero of *Mask Of Eternity*... yet.

Controls:	Keyboard		SHIFT	Modify action
CURSORS	Forward/back/left/right		CTRL	Toggle cursor
END	Walk/run		ALT	Put away weapon
INSERT	Jump		SPACE	Open/close interface
DELETE	Switch weapon		Mouse	Camera view/action
HOME	Centre camera		F1	Online help
TAB	Map			

CTRL	Fire
TAB	Change weapon
A	Look up
Z	Look down
+/-	Sniper zoom
F5	Gun/dashboard on/off
INSERT	Look left
PGUP	Look right
HOME	Look behind
DELETE	Exit vehicle
F1-F3	Camera modes

E	End Turn
+/-	Change game speed
I	Intelligence report

TONIC TROUBLE
Ubi Soft

Aimed at the more console-minded among you, *Tonic Trouble* has you gliding down a snowy course at breakneck speed in this 3D platformer while attempting to get as many power-ups as possible. And yes, you do need a 3D card.

Controls:	Keyboard/gamepad
A	Jump
SPACE	Fire
LEFT SHIFT	Run
LEFT CTRL	Action

MADDEN NFL 99
EA Sports

The graphics get better and better with each instalment of *Madden*, but the rules remain the same. For those who understand them, here is the latest version. The controls change depending on which position you're in, just to make things that much easier.

Controls:	Keyboard/gamepad
S	Dive
D	Pass/speed
F	Fake snap/spin/power tackle
E	Jump/hurdle
W	Left arm
R	Right arm

See what happens when you use Worcestershire sauce as embalming fluid.

RESIDENT EVIL 2
Capcom/Virgin

Get ready to fight off hungry zombies as this PlayStation hit finally comes to the PC. You'll need a 3D card and fast reflexes if you want to avoid your brain turning into soufflé. Warning: if you are under 15 years of age, don't play this game. You might become psychotic and end up stabbing people.

Controls:	Keyboard/gamepad	A	Map
UP/DOWN	Walk forwards/back	Z	Menu
LEFT/RIGHT	Turn left/right	V	Cancel
X	Ready weapon	F9	Exit
C	Action		

LORDS OF MAGIC SPECIAL EDITION
Sierra

The Special Edition fixes some bugs and includes a whole new campaign for the magical strategy game. This demo lets you choose between playing as a warrior or a mage.

Controls:	Mouse/keyboard
A	Attack
D	Defend

Rogue Squadron in full swing. Pretty, isn't it?

STAR WARS: ROGUE SQUADRON 3D
LucasArts

Climb into your X-Wing and live out your childhood *Star Wars* fantasies – the ones that didn't involve Princess Leia and a dirty weekend on Endor, that is. May the Force and a 3D card be with you in this one-mission demo.

Controls:	Joystick/keyboard/mouse
UP/DOWN	Pitch up/down
LEFT/RIGHT	Turn Left/right
SPACE	Fire primary weapon
ALT	Fire secondary weapon
W	Accelerate
S	Brake
E	Roll craft
F	Open and close S-foils
ESC	Pause
F1-F5	Cameras 1-5
F8	Toggle cockpit view
Z	Drop camera

It's *Star Wars*, what are you waiting for?

"My sword is bigger than yours."

ASGHAN
Grolier Interactive

The shadow of *Tomb Raider* looms again, this time putting you in the place of a muscular barbarian in a land of fantasy. Use your sword to cut your enemies to bits, or kill them with a well-placed crossbow arrow. And don't forget your magic spells.

Controls:	Keyboard	**CTRL+SHIFT**	Advanced combat moves
UP	Run forwards		
DOWN	Jump backwards	**RIGHT MOUSE BUTTON**	Toggle crossbow mode
LEFT/RIGHT	Turn left/right		
DELETE	Sidestep left	**LEFT MOUSE BUTTON**	Fire arrow
PGDN	Sidestep right		
ALT	Jump	**F1**	Cast spell
SHIFT	Walk/swim	**TAB**	Inventory
SPACE	Pick up/hold/use	**ESC**	Main menu
CTRL	Combat moves		

Viper Racing: the road is all yours. If only you had some wheels.

VIPER RACING
Sierra

If you like your cars fast, look no further than the Dodge Viper. This demo gives you the chance of getting behind the wheel of one of these beasts and crashing as often as you like. Then you can select manual gears and do some *real* driving.

Controls:	Keyboard/gamepad	**A**	Upshift
UP/DOWN	Accelerate/brake	**Z**	Downshift
LEFT/RIGHT	Steer left/right	**E**	E-brake
R	Reverse	**H**	Horn
C	Clutch	**F1-F11**	Camera controls
		1	Toggle overlay
		PGUP	Next driver
		PGDN	Previous driver

ADDED EXTRAS
ON THE CD

Here's a glimpse at some of the added extras we've got for you on this month's free *PC ZONE* CD

Cheat 0 Matic
Automatic cheat program for any DOS- or Windows-based game.

DirectX 6.0 for Windows 95/98
Essential drivers for most Windows 95/98 games.

EzDesk 1.8
Saves the position of your desktop shortcuts and folders.

FileView 2.1
Hex/ASCII viewer for binary files.

Game Wizard 32
Enables you to enhance the features of the game as well as the speed.

GameHack
Modify the properties of some your favourite games.

HyperSnap-DX 3.21.00
Screen-capture utility, even in DirectX/Direct3D or 3dfx Glide modes.

SciTech Display Doctor v6.53
The latest release of the universal graphics card utility.

UHS Reader for Windows 95
Provides an alternative way of getting help if you get stuck in a game.

Universal Game Editor
A program specifically designed for editing saved game files.

WinZip 7.0
Windows and NT version of WinZip.

Ameol v2.50
Brand new software for the excellent online service that is CIX.

Kali95 1.61
Latest version of the client software for playing games over the Internet.

TimeOnline v1.10e
Simple and effective utility to track your Net time.

GetRight 3.3.1
Salvage broken downloads and more.

mIRC 5.4
Latest version of the Internet Relay Chat software.

CompuServe 2.6a
Try CompuServe free for one month and get on the Internet.

GameSpy 2.05
Finds all the fastest servers playing your favourite games.

ClaraNET
Sign up files for ClaraNET. Requires *IE4*.

EXTENDED PLAY
TOCA TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP
If you want to drive the latest models of your favourite cars, you don't have to wait for the sequel. We've got mods of updated cars, the official Codemasters update patch and an editor. Turn to page 148 for more details.

X-WING VS TIE-FIGHTER
Breathe new life into your *Star Wars* collection with 18 new missions for this fantastic space combat sim. Whether it's the Dark Side that tickles your fancy or those goodie-two-shoes Rebels, you can find plenty to do here.

HALF-LIFE
We won't bore you all over again with details of how *Half-Life* changed the face of 3D shooters with the most involving story and most compelling gameplay ever, we'll just point you in the direction of these 26 new deathmatch maps and hope you enjoy them.

EDITORIAL

ON THE CD

Unreal Top Tip: Never go fishing with a blaster.

Here's all the other stuff from this issue we couldn't fit anywhere else

Unreal: Fusion Map Pack
A collection of six *Unreal* deathmatch maps, available as a free release from Epic Megagames.

Tips & Solutions
Solutions for every game we've ever run a walkthrough for, including cheats and hacks for the latest and the greatest.

Formula Sprint Driver
At the request of one Watchdog letter-writer (check out page

136), the latest Win 9.x driver for the Formula Sprint steering wheel.

DX-Ball 2
As featured in Online (page 28), the follow-up to the great *Arkanoid* clone.

Championship Manager 2 Update
If you haven't got hold of *CM3* yet, keep your old version up to date with this data file that includes all the latest transfers

and statistics. Remember: this update overwrites your current savegame files, so beware.

Wireplay
All the classics on Wireplay: Backgammon, Fox & Geese, Draughts, Chess, Black Maria, Cribbage and *M.U.D. 2*, plus the latest version of the Client software, of course.

Multipath Movies
The world's first interactive movie comes to a PC near you!

PATCHES

ON THE CD

Don't miss out on all the new patches that have been released

DUNE 2000 1.06
Better ladder tracking, ten new multiplayer maps, three new units and two new tile sets.

FRONT OFFICE FOOTBALL 1.0c
Trading AI improved, Endurance ratings added, and Run block ratings added.

HALF-LIFE v1.0.0.5 to v1.0.0.8 patch
New multiplayer maps and models, and improved bandwidth and latency utilisation. Essential.

HALF-LIFE PowerVR driver
Play *Half-Life* with super-sexy graphics on your PowerVR card.

HERETIC II 1.01
Fixes a problem found with certain joysticks and gamepads.

KKND II (multiplayer update)
Improved network play now available!

POPULOUS III 1.01
Fixes the shamen/balloon problem, Max Building problem resolved and more!

RAILROAD TYCOON II 1.03 (European release)
Addresses the AWE 64 and some graphical glitches found.

RETURN FIRE II 1.1
Includes the official patch to *RFII*, and two maps.

RETURN TO KRONDOR 1.00.6
Fixes crashes, Boot to disk and some Direct Sound-related issues.

SHOGO 2.0 to 2.1
Support for 50+ levels, fixes cheat crash, memory leak fix and much more.

STARCRAFT 1.04
Compatibility with Brood War, Stim Pack/Firebats slow-fire

corrected, Air Unit movement corrected.

THE GOLF PRO 2.01
Bug fixes, tweaks and improvements from Empire Interactive.

UNREAL (shadows patch for Creative Labs GB TNT)
Fixes bug found when playing *Unreal* with Creative Labs' GB TNT card.

VIGILANCE 1.1
Fixes Memory, Start/End game glitch and improved HEAT.net gameplay.

WARGASM
Fixes a known DVD and PCI sound card problems.

WORLD WAR II FIGHTERS 1.05
Improved multiplayer respawning, switch from POV hat, mid-air collisions etc.

Defend the windmill from tourists in *Myth II*.

MYTH II: SOULBLIGHTER

Bungie/GT Interactive

Myth was a flawed classic that brought a third dimension to the strategy genre. This long-awaited sequel shows you whether Bungie have got it right this time, and includes a tutorial to talk you through all the basics. Then you can start assaulting villages with your army of dwarves, mages and archers. (*Myth II: Soulblighter* is reviewed on page 80.)

Controls:	Keyboard/mouse		
W	Forward	**ALT**	Set preset
S	Back	**H**	Centre selection
Z	Move left	**B**	Scatter units
X	Move right	**R**	Retreat units
A	Turn left	**CTRL**	Attack ground
D	Turn right	**T**	Special ability
Q	Orbit left	**N**	Rename units
E	Orbit right	**Y**	Chat message
C	Zoom in	****	Detach units
V	Zoom out	**G**	Guard units
F	Rotate preset	**TAB**	Overhead map
SPACE	Stop units	**ESC**	Pause game
RETURN	Select all	**U**	Taunt
DELETE	Clear preset	**>**	Rotate units right
		<	Rotate units left

Witness the mighty sneeze of the dwarf.
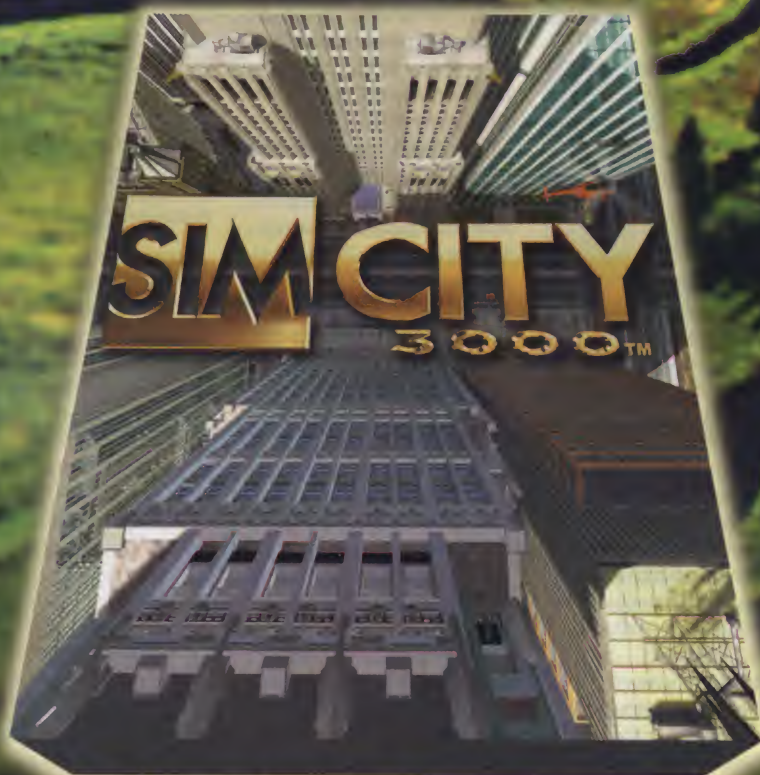
EXTENDED PLAY

Get this: close to 30 new maps for *Half-Life*, loads of new campaigns for *X-Wing Vs TIE Fighter*, and the 1998 cars for *TOCA: Touring Car Championship*. Suit you, sir?

✪ WORDS Phil Wand

TRY IT YOURSELF

ON THE CD On this month's cover CD we've got all the official patches, bug fixes, utilities and map editors we could find, including all the ones mentioned in these pages. To track them down, use the CD browser to go to the Patches section. All the patches are listed with a brief description and any relevant documentation. Make sure you read any associated README files for information on how to install individual patches. For further help, turn to our CD pages, starting on page 142.

> **Many of the *Doom* and *Duke Nukem* fans who obstinately refused to play *Quake* because it was too brown, too murky, too alien or because they just didn't like it are now clamouring to play *Half-Life***

HALF-LIFE

✪ Maps galore for the best first-person shooter yet

ON THE CD There's no doubt that *Half-Life* (PCZ #71, 95%) is destined to become as big as anything iD have ever done. Many of the *Doom* and *Duke Nukem* fans who obstinately refused to play *Quake* because it was too brown, too murky, too alien or because they just didn't like it (and I include myself among them) are now clamouring to play *Half-Life*. And where they were once extolling the virtues of *Doom,* they are now waxing lyrical about Valve's new toy. The Internet is already swelling with custom files, some of which are presented here. Simply drop the BSP files into your \Half-Life\valve\maps\ directory, and those new maps show up when you go to spawn a multiplayer game. Dead simple, really.

✪ **AFTER HOURS**
(AFTERHRS.ZIP) Darkness descends upon an office building hidden deep within a secret government facility. Deathmatch for 2-6 players.

✪ **MILITARY ARCHIVES**
(ARCHIVES.ZIP) A remake of the Military Archives level from *GoldenEye* on the N64. Deathmatch for 2-6 players.

✪ **BATTLEFIELD** *(BFIELD.ZIP)*
A small battlefield with hills, bunkers, a turret and lots of carnage. A bit sluggish, but good

if your machine can keep up. Deathmatch for 4-8 players.

✪ **UNDERGROUND BUNKER**
(BUNKER.ZIP) Built to look like a military bunker, this map works best with four or more players. Deathmatch for 2-8 players.

✪ **PARANOID CRAWLSPACE**
(CRAWL01.ZIP) Provides a number of ventilation ducts to crawl through, plus plenty of areas from which to crouch down and snipe at passers by. Deathmatch for 2-8 players.

✪ **DMZARENA** *(DMZARENA.ZIP)*
A rugged terrain with deathmatch starts at the far end of the area. Small bunkers provide cover. Deathmatch for 2-8 players.

✪ **FACEOFF** *(FACEOFF.ZIP)* Small, quick, and really designed for close combat only. Excellent fun for small networks. Two-player deathmatch.

✪ **SWEET FAREWELL**
(FAREWELL.ZIP) A conversion of an existing *Quake II* map that flies best when played with a full load. Deathmatch for 4-8 players.

✪ **THE GARDEN** *(GARDEN.ZIP)* An interpretation of a space station, complete with a laboratory, offices and so on. You'll need a torch to explore the tortuous (and extremely dark) network of ventilation shafts. Deathmatch for 2-12 players.

✪ **GIBEM' ALL** *(GIBEMALL.ZIP)*
Quick, slick and really rather frantic. Good for Internet play, as a P133 chugs along just fine, and the core BSP file is small and

downloads in no time. Deathmatch for 4-8 players.

✪ **KRHLDM01** *(KRHLDM01.ZIP)*
An abandoned 23rd century… chocolate factory? Why is a chocolate factory littered with heavy weaponry? You'll have to play it to find out. Deathmatch for 2-6 players.

✪ **KRHLDM02** *(KRHLDM02.ZIP)*
An open arena. Needs a Pentium II and 3Dfx to work well, but excellent fun nonetheless. Recommended, in fact. Deathmatch for 2-6 players.

✪ **THE PULPIT** *(LRDM1.ZIP)* On the creaky side and a bit dark (the author admits it hasn't been fully playtested), but quite quick and could be good with lots of players. Deathmatch for 2-8 players.

✪ **MANHUNT** *(MANHUNT.ZIP)*
A *Half-Life* adaptation of an existing *Quake II* level of the same name. Atmospheric, and more suited to larger groups of players. Deathmatch for 4-12 players.

✪ **THE MOEBIUS HUB**
(MOEBIUS.ZIP) Designed for

EXTENDED PLAY FAVOURITES

Want to know where to go for the best websites? Look no further – we've done the searching for you

Half-Life http://betelgeuse.usp.net/

Sierra's Half-Life site www.sierrastudios.com/games/half-life/

X-Wing Vs TIE Fighter http://zone.simplenet.com/xvt/

LucasArts' X-Wing Vs TIE site www.lucasarts.com/static/xvt/xvtframes2.htm

TOCA: Touring Car Championship www.tpjones.demon.co.uk/tocaug.htm

Codemasters' TOCA site www.touringcar.com/

tacticians, this map provides plenty of cover for campers and some nice design touches. Deathmatch for 2-6 players.

✪ **SPEED MOEBIUS**
(MOEBIUS2.ZIP) Same as above, but designed specifically for snappy, lag-free Internet play. No transparent textures or glass. Shame about the file size. Deathmatch for 2-6 players.

✪ **MOOG** *(MOOG.ZIP)* Indoors and on the dark side – so crank up that gamma before you start. Special emphasis on quick Internet play – map objects known to cause higher pings have been specifically avoided. Deathmatch for 2-6 players.

✪ **OUTPOST** *(OUTPOST.ZIP)* Lots of open air, leading to lots of pistol fights with the protagonists standing 300 yards apart. The author notes that there are specific places for trip wires – aka 'coward bombs'. Deathmatch for 2-8 players.

✪ **PIPEWORKS** *(PIPES.ZIP)*
Fantastic map, visually stunning,

A camper gets his come-uppance…

…and is turned into a puff of ketchup.

and complete with custom textures. The downside is that it can get awfully slow in places (especially from high up in the watchtower) and it's on the large side – so LAN play only. Deathmatch for 2-16 players.

PZMALICE *(PZMALICE.ZIP)*
A medium-sized map that sees you running around inside some sort of warehouse. Reasonably quick, and a good central area. Deathmatch for 2-6 players.

> **Despite being a bit of a handful to control, *TOCA Touring Car Championship* is still one of the more popular drives**

SANDS OF SORROW
(SANDS.ZIP) Canyon area with the odd cactus. Large open arena requires beefy computers. Not that good for Internet play. Deathmatch for 4-8 players.

SWIMMING *(SWIMMING.ZIP)*
Set in a shipping depot. The *Half-Life* Net community is raving about this map, but we don't think it's much cop, especially as it requires a 400MHz engine and Voodoo2 before you can even

contemplate playing it. Deathmatch for 8-12 players.

THE BLOCK *(TBLOCK.ZIP)*
Urban combat level, with nine buildings set in a city square. Reminiscent of an original *Doom* v1 map. Deathmatch for 4-6 players.

THE DAM MAP
(THEDAM_1ON1.ZIP) Similar to Faceoff in that it has been designed specifically for one-on-one play. Includes two large dams

with a dried-up river separating them. Very quick, even on low-spec machines. Two-player deathmatch.

THE VAT *(THEVAT.ZIP)* One of the first *Half-Life* multiplayer maps to appear, The Vat is actually quite good, with a superb central gantry area and mezzanine walkways. Deathmatch for 2-8 players.

WHACK-A-MOLE
(WHAKAMOLE.ZIP) Despite the

silly name, this map proved the most popular of all the deathmatch levels here. Great central area, simple and easy to navigate, with superb object and weapon placement. Enough to keep three or more people busy for hours. Recommended. Deathmatch for 2-6 players.

TOCA: TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP
Editor and new car sets for TOCA

Despite being a bit of a handful to control, *TOCA: Touring Car Championship* (PCZ #59, 86%) is still one of the more popular drives. It's recently been back in the news because of an upcoming sequel (already available for some months on the PlayStation). So, with everyone getting interested again, here are some tools and updates for the old game.

TOCA EDITOR *(TEDIT.ZIP)*
A little gem that enables you to import, export and view the various graphical data files from inside *TOCA: Touring Car*

Championship. Please remember that, like many game-editing packages, it's both unsupported and unofficial. It also assumes you're using the infamous *FakeCD* utility to run the game – that's how you get the editable files on to your hard disk in the first place. To use, open up one of the game's .BFP files and you see a standard Windows 'treeview' appear showing all relevant data objects. Importing a bitmap is easy – *TEdit* even adjusts the length of your file to suit the game. Exporting enables you to save an editable bitmap, which you should not rename, as *TEdit* requires it

should you need to import it back again. Viewing opens up your default picture viewer.

UPDATED CARSETS
(98XXXXXX.ZIP) A group of archives with the latest versions of some of the cars, complete with new decals and colours. Follow the instructions that come with each file: you need *TEdit* to help you import the new graphics.

TOCA v1.1 PATCH
(PATCHEFG.EXE) The official Codemasters patch that improves network play, graphics card and joystick support. Most importantly, it allows you to shut the commentator up. PCZ

A dead hedgehog's view of the first corner at Silverstone.

Bandit! Twelve o'clock!

X-WING VS TIE FIGHTER
New missions to keep *Star Wars* fans happy

Following on from last month's look at *X-Wing Vs TIE Fighter* utilities, we've now got a bunch of top-rated missions for you to get your teeth into. Do remember to check the documentation that accompanies each file, as each mission has a different installation. Note that some require you to have the *Balance Of Power* add-on pack.

AFTERMATH AT ENDOR
(AENDOR.ZIP) The Death Star has been destroyed and the Empire is on its knees. A few remaining Imperial forces refuse to accept defeat, and it's your job to either help them or kill them.

BOTHAN *(BOTHAN.ZIP)*
A dangerous Rebel Alliance mission in Bothan Space. Several different missions are supplied. Don't try playing as Imperial, it won't work.

BOTHAN II *(BOTHAN2.ZIP)*

This mission follows on from the original instalment, with the Bothans now firmly in support of the Alliance. A captured Imperial base reveals new TIE Defender craft, and you're now given the chance to fly as Executive Officer of your squadron. Now more involving and considerably more difficult.

BSP'S STAND *(BSP1.ZIP)* Puts you and six other wingmen in the middle of a frantic battle against the Empire. Watch out for the

cavalry in the form of a fleet of A-Wings and Han Solo in an old YT-1400. You can also jump into a TIE Fighter and play as the other side.

INTERDICTOR HEARTHUNGER *(BWPRO.ZIP)*
Prototype B-Wings have been pulled out of hyperspace by the Interdictor Hearthunger. Very simple, not too long, and just the right level of difficulty. Recommended.

RAID ON THE CALAMARI
(CALAMARI.ZIP) Sees the Rebel Alliance fighting off two Victory Star Destroyers, both intent on wiping out the Calamari Cruiser.

RAID ON A DISABLED STAR DESTROYER *(CAPISD.ZIP)* Puts you in Imperial shoes – slinky numbers that make a satisfying 'click' on mezzanine floors – defending a captured Star Destroyer from Rebel Alliance.

ESCORT THE CARTAGAR
(CARTAG10.ZIP) A total of nine co-operative Imperial missions, set just after the embarrassing defeat at Endor. You and other remaining forces have been summoned to Coruscant, and it's your job to climb aboard a gunboat and protect the Victor Star Destroyer Cartagar. Recommended.

BATTLE FOR CORUSCANT
(COR.ZIP) Starts two years after the Battle of Endor, and again is centred around the Coruscant

Imperial stronghold. With a new Rogue Squadron advancing on the planet, a punch-up is certain.

DEFENDER WING
(DEFENDERWING.ZIP) A series of multiplayer missions that begin immediately after the Empire's arrival on the ice planet of Hoth, and follows a group of B-Wing pilots called Defender Wing. For *Balance Of Power* owners only.

ADVANCED DOGFIGHT TRAINING COURSE
(DOGTRAIN.ZIP) Designed for two players, one representing the Rebel Alliance and the other the Empire. The object is to destroy your opponent. The only trouble is that you enter the arena unarmed. For masochists only.

ESCAPE FROM VALA ZERO
(ESCAPEVO.ZIP) A series of four missions that follow a group of escaped prisoners – Rebel pilots who have stolen a Muurian transport vessel and several TIE Advanceds – as they return to base.

RETURN OF THE EMPIRE
(IMPMISS.ZIP) Sees the Empire taking delivery of new TIE Defender craft and missile boats. With the Super Star Destroyer Tyrant at your command, go and kick the crap out of anything that looks even remotely rebellious. Good fun.

THE IMPERIAL BETRAYAL BATTLE *(MP_TIB11.ZIP)* Eight new missions that follow the

Empire's bid to track down a conspiracy by a group of high-ranking officers.

NIGHT STALKER PIRATES
(SURVIVAL.ZIP) The Night Stalkers are barely surviving under a tough Imperial regime. This mission chronicles their bid to outwit the Empire and rival pirates.

NEW REPUBLIC TALON SQUADRON *(TALONMISS.ZIP)*
Follows an elite New Republic A-Wing squadron that consists entirely of Jedi pilots. The squadron's mission is to stop the Galactic Empire from intimidating peaceful areas of the galaxy.

THE DIUTURNAL ORDER
(TDOFULL.ZIP) A sequence of missions that track a squadron of breakaway pilots from the Rebel Alliance. Stealing fighters, provisions and assault craft, they set up as mercenaries and disappear off into the distance.

BATTLE ON THE RIM
(TOUR6_BOP.ZIP) The Rebels are based on Hoth and are again fending off the evil advances of the Galactic Empire. Not bad for a quick blast.

THE VALIANT'S TALE
(TVT.ZIP) Provides 19 new multiplayer missions that tell the story of the Rebel Alliance after the Battle of Endor. Lots of action and lots of capital ships. Recommended.

NEWSWIRE

This month's hottest news on Wireplay, the UK's number one online gaming network

Wireplay
The games network from BT

⭐ **WEIRD** Warren Chrismas

TAKE US ON!

HALF-LIFE – WEDNESDAY 10 MARCH

WIN!

Play the *PC ZONE* posse and win *two* Diamond Voodoo2 12Mb 3D accelerators or one of 50 special edition *Half-Life* T-shirts

Some are calling it the game of 1998, the game of the decade, and the best *Quake* clone *ever*. Some even say it's better than sex (only very stupid people, mind). But are *you* any good at it (er, *Half-Life*, that is)?

Well hey, now you can find out in the inaugural *PC ZONE* versus reader non-celebrity deathmatch. Just log on to Wireplay's *Half-Life* servers any time from 6pm-9pm on Wednesday 10 March. We'll be around waiting with our crowbars. Oh, yes.

Haven't tried Wireplay yet? Then see the What Is Wireplay? panel on the right. You'll find all the software you need (apart from a full copy of *Half-Life*, of course) on this month's cover CD.

The best player on the night will win *both* 12Mb Voodoo2 boards on offer courtesy of Diamond Multimedia, giving one lucky punter what's generally regarded as the best kick-ass 3D acceleration option around. And

Yes, it could be you on the end of our crowbar. So to speak.

Reckon you're a bit handy at Half-Life? Come and prove it, then.

thanks to those nice people at Sierra, we've also got 50 (yep, 50) special edition glow-in-the-dark *Half-Life* T-shirts to give away as runners-up prizes.

Please note: to be in with a chance of winning a prize you *must*: a) play against us on the night (obviously), and b) email Richie at richie.pcz@dial.pipex.com within 48 hours of the tournament with the subject line '*Half-Life* rules!' and the following information: your *Half-Life* nickname, your Wireplay nickname, your real name, and your full postal address.

❂ *That's it. See ya online. And watch out for a special report in a forthcoming issue.*

IN THE CLUB: F-22

"...We also have a large selection of duty-free cigarettes, perfumes, drinks..."

This month the spotlight falls on the Wireplay club for players of DID's popular combat flight sims *F-22: ADF* and *F-22:TAW*

CLUB CAPTAIN: Foxbat (real name Jason Turner)
CAPTAIN'S EMAIL ADDRESS: foxbat@talus.force9.net
CLUB WEBSITE: www.talus.force9.co.uk/f22
CLUB HISTORY: The F-22 club, which caters for owners of *F-22: ADF* and the more recently released *F-22: TAW*, was started on Wireplay around a year ago by Hotpants. Foxbat (one of the first Wireplay subscribers) now runs it with the help of "another top-class pilot" named XL.
TOURNAMENT DETAILS: After something of a gap, tournaments started up again recently and should now take place every Thursday starting at 8pm and ending before 10pm. To join in you can just drop into the F-22 proposal hosted by Foxbat. Players should have the game installed with multiplayer patch v5.144 (available from www.did.com). Tournament conditions are subject to change (see the above website for more details) but are usually one-against-one knockout finals (ten kills for a win) with a two-four player final (20 kills for a win). A £30 HMV voucher prize is offered every month.
BEST F-22 PLAYERS ON WIREPLAY: Foxbat, XL, Crazycow, Yoyo, Hotpants.

TOP MULTIPLAYER TIPS FROM FOXBAT

1 Get your speed right (around 400 knots is best for general flying). Fly too fast and you'll overshoot your target or find that you can't turn tightly enough to face your opponent. Fly too slowly and you'll be a sitting target, possibly stalling in tight turns or loops.

2 Turn rate is important in dogfights. If you can turn sharper than your opponent, you'll have an advantage over him. The F-22 seems to have an optimum turn rate of around 230-240kn; anything lower may cause you to stall, while anything higher means you won't be turning as sharply as you could be.

3 Don't try and use thrust vectoring constantly. At over 350kn, it isn't going to make that much of a noticeable difference on your manoeuvrability. At 230-240kn, using thrust vectoring in a tight turn will usually bleed your speed very fast, and you'll end up in a stall if you don't keep an eye on your speed.

4 Try not to unnecessarily gain too much height if you don't need it – you risk losing speed over your opponent(s) and, at the worst, stalling accidentally, leaving you as a sitting target.

5 Avoid head-on shoot-outs if possible. Two of you speeding towards each other with cannons blazing will usually result in both of you dying. At the very least, the best method is to take your best shot with the cannon then move quickly before your opponent's shells hit you. If you're lucky, your opponent won't have moved fast enough to avoid your fire, and will be damaged or destroyed.

6 In free-for-all battles with more than two players, always try to focus on a single player and not both/all of them together. If you split your attention between every individual, you'll get shot while trying to decide who to shoot next.

Bandits at six o'clock? That's okay, we've got half an hour, then, etc etc...

ZONE ON WIREPLAY

PLAY GAMES NOW! 4 JANUARY 1999

Play board and card games against anyone, anywhere, any time with Wireplay's just-launched new service

Wireplay kicked off a new service, Play Games Now!, at the end of December with a launch event which featured world champion Garry Kasparov beating 12 school kids at chess live and online. Bless 'em.

Separate from the main Wireplay service, Play Games Now! enables anyone from anywhere in the world to play others at board and card games via a standard Web browser. The catch? There isn't one – it's totally free and you don't even have to be registered with the full Wireplay service to play. Admittedly you need to grab some files from Wireplay's website (a 229K helper program plus a file for each individual game), but once you've downloaded and installed those, and filled in the brief registration form on the site, you're just a few seconds away from a game at any time.

Currently in beta stage, although fully operational, Play Games Now! offers two games – chess (1.4Mb) and backgammon (2.6Mb) – with the likes of poker, bridge, cribbage, hearts and draughts to be added to the service in due course.

Your correspondent (ex-school chess champion, but that was, like, 13 years ago and I've played very little since) challenged James Kay, a marketing bod from Wireplay who reckoned he was "bollox", to a game of chess... and, er, lost.

Only later did we find out that Mr Kay was being 'helped' – in other

The mysterious Oscar?

words, all the moves were being done by a mysterious character called Oscar. Still, that's the problem with online games – you don't *really* know who you're playing, do you? I mean, it could have been Garry Kasparov – Kasparov playing very badly, that is.

Whatever, from our little trial the service seems to work well. It's certainly simple enough – as you'd expect, you just drag-and-drop the pieces around the board. There are a few nice options too, including a very handy time limit facility.

When we originally logged on during daytime hours in early January, we couldn't find anyone to play against on the service. Expect this situation to change when bored office workers find out about it.

○ Full details on the Play Games Now! service can be found at **www.wireplay.co.uk/playnow/**. Watch out for a chess-related Wireplay competition in the next issue of PC ZONE, on sale Friday 12 March.

Warren (black) takes a battering against Wireplay's James Kaye and a bloke called Oscar. Moments later we were 'mysteriously' disconnected.

FROM THE WIRES

○ Nemesis (Matt Hawkins) emailed us to say that he's set up a *HALF-LIFE* clan called Steel Fury and is looking for other readers to join him (visit **www.warwickshire. freeserve. co.uk** for more information). Several other *HALF-LIFE* clans are also actively recruiting players – check-out the *HALF-LIFE* messageboard on the Wireplay website (**www.wireplay.co.uk**) for all the latest chat.

○ *MOTOCROSS MADNESS* tournaments have now begun on Wireplay. You can find full details and information on the club for players of Microsoft's smart motorbike game at **www.wireplay.co.uk/html/stories/301198motoclub.htm**.

○ Are you ready to rumble? Just added to the Wireplay roster is VR-1's *RUMBLE IN THE VOID*, a totally free multiplayer action-strategy game which is not entirely dissimilar to Virgin's popular online title *Subspace*. Wireplay users can download the game via the Game Worlds channel. You can find more information at VR-1's website (**www.vr1.com/sneak/rumble/index.html**). More on this game in the next issue of your favourite PC games magazine, on sale Friday 12 March.

○ Real-time strategy fans can now try multiplayer *SETTLERS III* online for free, as Wireplay have added support for the demo version of the game. The demo itself is available from Blue Byte's website at **www.settlers3.com**.

WIREPLAY CHARTS

EARLY JANUARY 1999

Nope, still no *Half-Life* in the charts, but it's surely just a matter of time. For now *Quake II* remains the most-played game on Wireplay, with freebie flight sim *Air Attack* dislodging *Quake* as the second-most popular title on the Game Worlds channel. *Age Of Empires: Rise Of Rome* has come from nowhere to lead on the Rapid Play channel.

GAME WORLDS CHANNEL
1. Quake II
2. Air Attack
3. Quake
4. MUD II
5. Unreal

RAPID PLAY CHANNEL
1. AOE: Rise Of Rome
2. MUD 2
3. Duke 3D
4. Total Annihilation
5. Wargasm

MIND GAMES CHANNEL
1. Bridge
2. Poker
3. Chess
4. Draughts
5. Reversi

WHAT IS WIREPLAY?

IT'S A GAMES NETWORK

○ Wireplay is a multiplayer games network from BT which enables you to meet and compete with other gamers from all over the UK. All the software you need to start up is on *PC ZONE's* cover CD each month. It's also on Wireplay's website at www.wireplay.co.uk. Alternatively, call freephone 0800 800918 and Wireplay will send you a CD-ROM with the client software, free online games, demos and more besides.

2 WAYS 2 PAY

○ There are two ways of paying for your time using the service. The Pay-As-You-Play option costs 2.5p a minute off-peak and 6p a minute during peak hours. Frequent users can use the Subscription service. This costs £9.95 a month or £99.50 a year but local call rate charges apply at all times.

WIREPLAY GAMES

Wireplay now supports over 100 games, the best of which you'll find listed below. Several top-rated titles (all awarded 80%+ in *PC ZONE*) were added to the roster in late 1998 including *Actua Soccer 3, AOE: Rise Of Rome, Colin McRae Rally, Half-Life, Motocross Madness* and *Wargasm*. The latest to be added are the demo version of *Settlers III* and *Rumble In The Void* (see From the Wires).

- Actua Golf 2
- Actua Soccer 3
- Age Of Empires (inc trial version)
- Age Of Empires: Rise Of Rome (inc demo)
- Air Attack
- Armored Fist 2
- Big Red Racing (inc Wireplay Edition)
- Colin McRae Rally
- Comanche 3
- Command & Conquer
- Descent 2
- Doom (v 1.9)/Doom II/ Ultimate Doom
- Duke Nukem 3D
- EF2000: Wireplay Edition
- Extreme Assault
- F-22: ADF
- F-22: Total Air War
- F/A-18 Korea
- Final Liberation
- Flight Sim 98
- Formula Karts
- Forsaken (inc demo)
- Fragile Allegiance
- G-Nome
- Half-Life
- Incubation
- Jedi Knight (inc MOTS)
- Legal Crime
- Monster Truck Madness 2
- Motocross Madness (inc trial)
- MUD II
- NASCAR Racing 2
- Netmech (MechWarrior II)
- Plane Crazy
- Populous: The Beginning (inc demo)
- Quake/Quake II
- Red Alert (inc Counterstrike/ Aftermath)
- Rumble in the Void – NEW!!!
- Settlers III (inc demo) – NEW!!!
- Shadow Warrior (inc shareware)
- Sid Meier's Gettysburg
- Star Wars Supremacy
- Terminal Velocity
- Total Annihilation
- Unreal
- Uprising
- Various card and board games
- Virtual Pool 2
- Virtual Snooker
- WarCraft 2 (inc demo)
- Wargasm (inc demo)
- Warhammer: Dark Omen

Wireplay
The games network from BT

THE LIONHEAD DIARIES

Continuing our insider's view of the making of *Black And White*, the first game from new developers Lionhead

⭐ **WORDS** Steve Jackson

PARTY LIKE IT'S 1999

There's a new sense of urgency at the Lionhead office, one which seemed to arise the moment we realised what the date was. This is the year in which *Black And White*, our first game, will ship. We've been working on it for 18 months, and the thought of actually releasing it scares us all to death.

The last year was monumental in terms of what we achieved. At the start of 1998 we were working in a cramped office in Peter Molyneux's house; now we have luxurious open-plan offices on the Surrey Research Park. A year ago there was virtually nothing to see of the game except a block-built 'creature' sliding around over a wireframe landscape; now we have fully articulated creatures stomping across beautiful countrysides and through villages, picking up villagers and animals to eat, or tossing them over their shoulders. And their flowing hair moves naturally as they swing their heads from side to side.

Things have also moved on in other areas. During this time the team has grown from eight to 17: the core team is now made up of five artists, two engine programmers, five game programmers and a sound programmer. This motley crew is drawn from all walks of life and includes – in former lives – rock band members, a disc jockey, a model for Pretty Polly tights, Cambridge graduates, vegetarians, gays, and a motorcycle despatch rider (for a company coincidentally called Black And White Couriers – spooky). You name it, we've got one at Lionhead. But the chemistry works amazingly well, and on a professional level everyone respects each other's skills.

> **We've been working on *Black And White* for 18 months, and the thought of actually releasing it scares us all to death**

You see, Lionhead have a golden rule: to never exceed 20-25 staff – employing above that number would put us in danger of losing the whole 'team spirit' working atmosphere. People become cliquey if there are too many departments and, for example, socialise on their own instead of inviting everyone else. However, limiting the number of staff would mean that Lionhead could only work on one game at a time, with the result that we'd only see a new Lionhead game once every two years – which is a depressing thought.

This led to the satellite idea, conceived by Mark Webley and myself, which was to bring outside development groups under the Lionhead wing. We could provide the right people (strong teams with original game ideas) with all the help and expertise needed to create their own games, and they could provide the enthusiasm and drive to make it happen. And they would be independent operations – separate limited companies – rather than Lionhead employees. In return, Lionhead would receive a modest stake in these companies and, if the scheme worked, a new Lionhead-related game could be appearing every six months.

The satellite idea has proved incredibly popular, not only with developers – a new way to get published will always be popular – but also with publishers, who have responded enthusiastically to the whole scheme. We have two satellite groups on the go – Big Blue Box Studios and Intrepid Developments – and one of our first priorities for 1999 is to get them signed up with publishing deals. More on these teams and their games in a future Diary article.

So all in all we had plenty to celebrate at the end of our first real year of operations. This we did in fine style at our end-of-year party at Molyneux Mansion (Peter's house). There was plenty of drink and silly games to keep the party going, but the most memorable moment was a card game in which everyone had a 75 per cent chance of winning either a lottery ticket or a 25 per cent chance of drawing a forfeit. To whoops of delight from the jeering crowd, it was finally Peter's turn. He drew a forfeit and had to throw himself into his swimming pool fully clothed. A perfect end to the year? PCZ

Lionhead have obviously been working (and playing) hard. Give them all a big hand.

"I wanna be a man-cub, and stroll right into town..."

● As well as being a director of start-up games developer Lionhead, Steve Jackson is co-founder of Games Workshop, author of Fighting Fantasy Gamebooks, and a columnist for The Daily Telegraph.
● The next instalment follows in next month's issue, on sale Friday 12 March.

Artist Christian Bravery takes a forfeit.
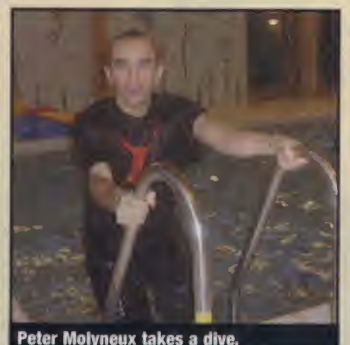
Peter Molyneux takes a dive.

SICK NOTES

THE PLACE TO WRITE FOR ABUSE

And still… they come. You're still sending in your abusive tirades, whimsical meanderings and schemes for wiping out the stupid. And we're still picking them apart in a snide and obnoxious manner. But that's life

⊙ SNEERING UNPLEASANTLY Charlie Brooker

TOP 40 IS "CRAP"

I'd like to name a band worse than Marilyn Manson: is the pop chart too large a vote? There's piles of synthesised crap mixed in between remixes and covers of old songs. You slate Marilyn Manson for being original and (shock horror) different from just about every other band around – so what does little Charlie like, then? Billie? The Spice Girls? Aqua?
'X Ahriman'

Psycho The Dolphin: the title says it all really.

⊙ Not really. But at least those three acts you mentioned aren't as fake as Marilyn and his pack of damaged children.

Still, I understand your point regarding the Top 40; but when has that ever been any good, eh? Eh? Oh, and is it just me, or does Fatboy Slim sound uncomfortably similar to Jive Bunny?

On another note, that Billie's got a really scary mouth, hasn't she? It's just so damn wide, it's like a slash in a piece of fabric, or the gurning gob of a gigantic whale. She looks like she should be swimming along the ocean bed, gulping down entire shoals of fish.

Speaking of which…

A GENIUS WRITES

I've got an idea for a game. It's a sort of sequel to *Ecco The Dolphin*. It's called *Psycho The Dolphin*, and it's the same as *Ecco The Dolphin*, but you swim around and do things like ram sharks in the gills, stuff like that.
'Skie'

⊙ That's completely brilliant.

DISSATISFIED CUSTOMER

I read your stupid replies in Sick Notes every month and I have to say your comments don't impress anyone. A question or statement is made by a reader, and then you just talk bollocks, forgetting the question and having an opinionated say on an issue of no importance to anyone whatsoever. In short you talk *shit*.

As I write I can imagine this letter being published and you giving a speech on the importance of CFCs in the atmosphere or some other rubbish.
Lee McGovern

⊙ Lee, Lee, Lee. How did you get so angry? I mean, come on. There's a beautiful world out there. Being cooped up has got you all prickly. Why not nip down your local park? Stroll in the sunshine. Walk beneath the trees. Lurk behind the bushes. Don a balaclava. Murder someone with a brick, for no apparent reason.

Sorry, forget that last bit. Must stop mind wandering. MI5 make mind wander with remote transmitter. Must. Resist. Signals…

WORST BAND OF ALL TIME UPDATE

A couple of issues ago, we asked you to nominate your least favourite bands. The entries are trickling in at last.

Name of act: B*Witched
Worst release: 'Rollercoaster'
They chew pole because: They can't sing but still manage to appear on every Saturday morning show simultaneously. And they look like a bulldog chewing on a bee. (That's a collective bulldog, and a collective bee, presumably.)
What I'd like to see happen to them: It would be nice if they were forced to

> "It's 1999, for heaven's sake! By rights we should all be having our bottoms wiped by friendly robots with personality disorders"

listen to the Spice Girls at full blast while being hit with sharp sticks.
Lee McGovern (again)

⊙ Keep 'em coming, but please: no more entries for Aqua, Billie or the Spices – they're just too obvious.

DUMB, DUMB, DUMB

Stupid people have really slowed down this planet's progress. If it wasn't for shit-heads the world over, we would be colonising space by now.
Danny Foulger

⊙ You tell 'em, Dan. It's 1999, for heaven's sake! By rights we should all be wearing baco-foil while racing hovercars around the inside of giant pinwheel space stations; or cavorting with psychic women from Pluto with bright purple hair; or eating traditional Sunday roasts in the form of pills; or having our bottoms wiped by friendly robots with personality disorders; or encountering strangely humourless alien races with giant brains who stand around wearing long white capes while delivering pompous lectures on mankind's unerring talent for self-destruction; or hurtling around a post-apocalyptic wasteland in makeshift buggies wearing fur and metal and fighting over water; or disappearing through wormholes. Or all of the above.

And instead, what do we get? We get more TV channels and a new range of Ginsters pasties. No wonder we're all so bitter.

WORST TOWN IN BRITAIN

We also asked you to nominate the worst town. Here are a few entries. Keep 'em coming. We'll compile a map soon.

Swindon. Living in that place is like living in a public toilet – it's always wet, no matter what the weather elsewhere. It would be more interesting to live in a Pot Noodle.
David Gower

Take a trip to Taunton. Sitting in a picturesque valley, it looks like a nice place to visit. But shit always rolls downhill, as they say. Try living there for two years. I was up to my neck in it.
Stewart Walker

If you're looking for a cesspit, forget Banbury, try Blackpool. An unadulterated pile of scum and w**kers such as you would never believe.
Steven Robinson